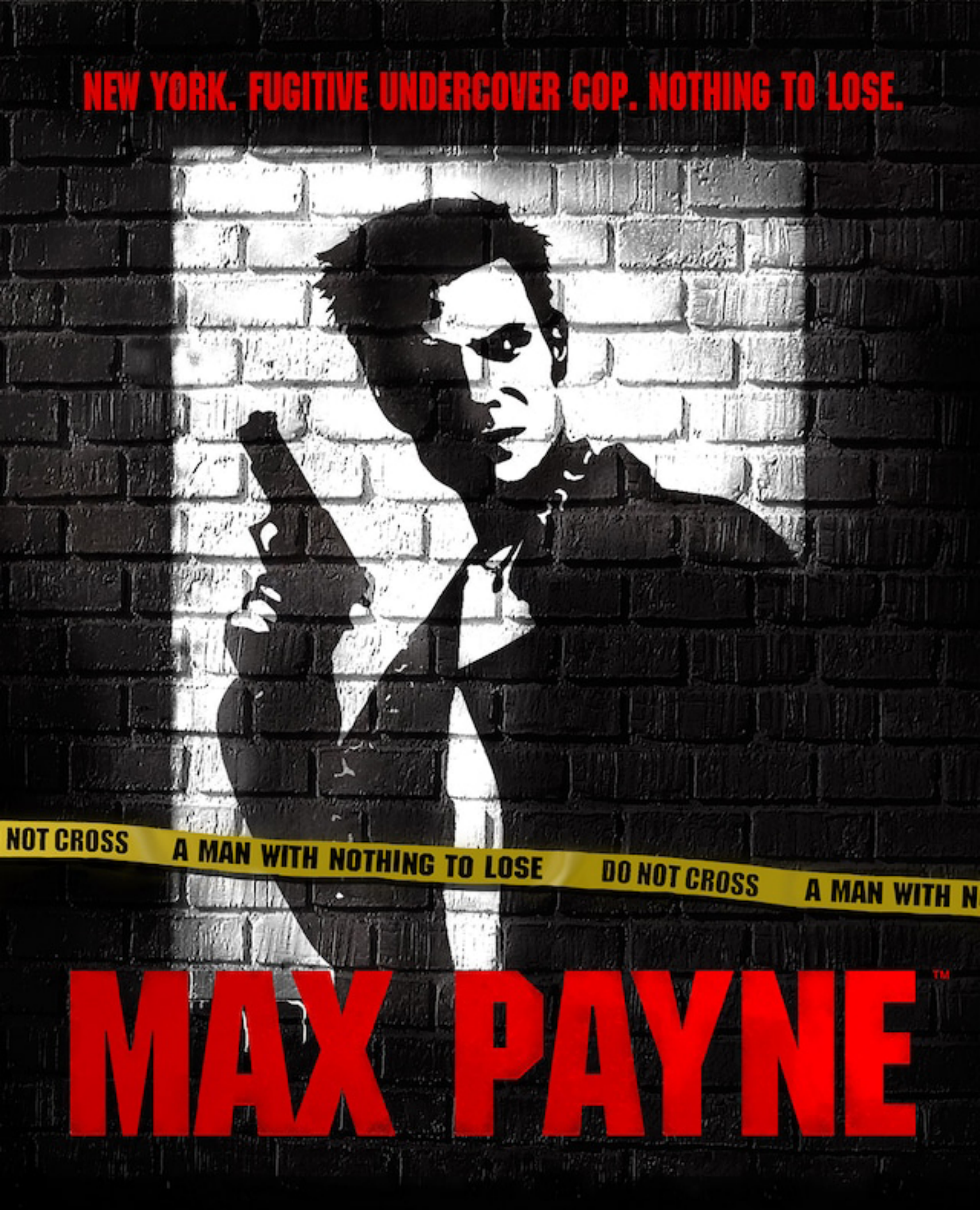

NEW YORK. FUGITIVE UNDERCOVER COP. NOTHING TO LOSE.
NOT CROSS A MAN WITH NOTHING TO LOSE DO NOT CROSS A MAN WITH N
MAX PAYNE™

TO MAKE ANY KIND OF SENSE OF IT I NEED TO GO BACK THREE YEARS--
BACK TO THE NIGHT THE PAIN STARTED.
NYPD
POLICE

MAX PAYNE™

PART I: THE AMERICAN DREAM

I WAS STILL IN THE FORCE BACK THEN. NYPD, MANHATTAN, MIDTOWN NORTH PRECINCT. HELL'S KITCHEN.
SO, WHEN ARE YOU COMING TO WORK FOR ME, DETECTIVE PAYNE?
YOU'D MAKE ME WORK UNDERCOVER IN SOME HELLHOLE. SORRY ALEX. MICHELLE AND THE BABY COME FIRST.

SEE! MY LAST SMOKE. IT'S BAD FOR THE BABY.
THAT'S YOU, MAX. A REGULAR BOY SCOUT.

SEE YOU, ALEX.
STILL ON FOR POKER THURSDAY NIGHT, RIGHT?
LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY.

LIFE WAS GOOD.
THE SUN SETTING ON A SWEET SUMMER'S DAY, THE SMELL OF FRESHLY MOWED LAWNS, THE SOUNDS OF CHILDREN PLAYING--
A HOUSE ACROSS THE RIVER, ON THE JERSEY-SIDE. A BEAUTIFUL WIFE AND A BABY GIRL.
THE AMERICAN DREAM COME TRUE.

HONEY, I'M HOME!
BUT DREAMS HAVE A NASTY HABIT OF GOING BAD WHEN YOU'RE NOT LOOKING.

THE SUN WENT DOWN WITH PRACTICED BRAVADO. TWILIGHT CRAWLED ACROSS THE SKY, LADEN WITH FOREBODING.
I DIDN'T LIKE THE WAY THE SHOW STARTED. BUT THEY HAD GIVEN ME THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE. FRONT ROW CENTER.

SOMETHING UGLY HAD BEEN TATTOOED ON THE WALL, A MAP OF THINGS TO COME.

IT WAS A POISON SYRINGE, A MAGIC TAG FULL OF DIABOLICAL MEANINGS.

LISTEN! SOMEONE'S BROKEN INTO MY HOUSE. CALL 911.
IS THIS THE PAYNE RESIDENCE?
YES, SOMEONE'S BROKEN INTO MY HOUSE, THEY ARE STILL HERE, YOU HAVE TO --
GOOD. I AM AFRAID I CANNOT HELP YOU.
WHO IS THIS?
KLIK!
HELLO?

THAT WAS THREE YEARS AGO. EVERYTHING RIPPED APART IN A NEW YORK MINUTE.

THE KILLER JUNKIES HAD BEEN HIGH ON A PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN DESIGNER DRUG: VALKYR, V.

AFTER THE FUNERAL, I TOLD ALEX I WOULD BE TRANSFERRING TO THE DEA.

IT TOOK US THREE LONG YEARS TO GET A BREAK IN THE VALKYR CASE.
THEN, FINALLY, TWO MONTHS AGO, A DIME-DROPPER TIPPED US OFF THAT JACK LUPINO, A MOB-BOSS IN THE PUNCHINELLO CRIME FAMILY, WAS TRAFFICKING.
I WENT UNDERCOVER, INFILTRATED THE WORST MAFIA FAMILY IN NEW YORK.

MAX PAYNE™

PART I: THE AMERICAN DREAM

CHAPTER ONE: ROSCOE STREET STATION

I CAME IN FROM THE COLD AND THE DARK. OUTSIDE, THE CITY WAS A CRUEL MONSTER.

BAR

I'D BEEN SLOWLY WORKING MY WAY FROM SMALL-TIME TO THE BIG FISH. TRYING TO GET TO THE SOURCE OF THE DRUG.

ALEX AND B.B. WERE MY ONLY CONTACTS IN THE DEA--

THE ONLY ONES IN THIS DECREPIT CITY WHO KNEW I WAS DOWN HERE.

B.B. HERE... SOMETHING URGENT HAS COME UP WITH JACK LUPINO. YOU NEED TO MEET WITH ALEX IMMEDIATELY... AT THE ROSCOE STREET STATION.

I HADN'T HAD A FACE TO FACE WITH ALEX SINCE I'D GONE UNDERCOVER.

OUTSIDE, THE MERCURY WAS FALLING FAST. IT WAS COLDER THAN THE DEVIL'S HEART, RAINING ICE PITCHFORKS AS IF THE HEAVENS WERE READY TO FALL.
EVERYONE WAS RUNNING FOR SHELTER LIKE THERE WAS NO TOMORROW.

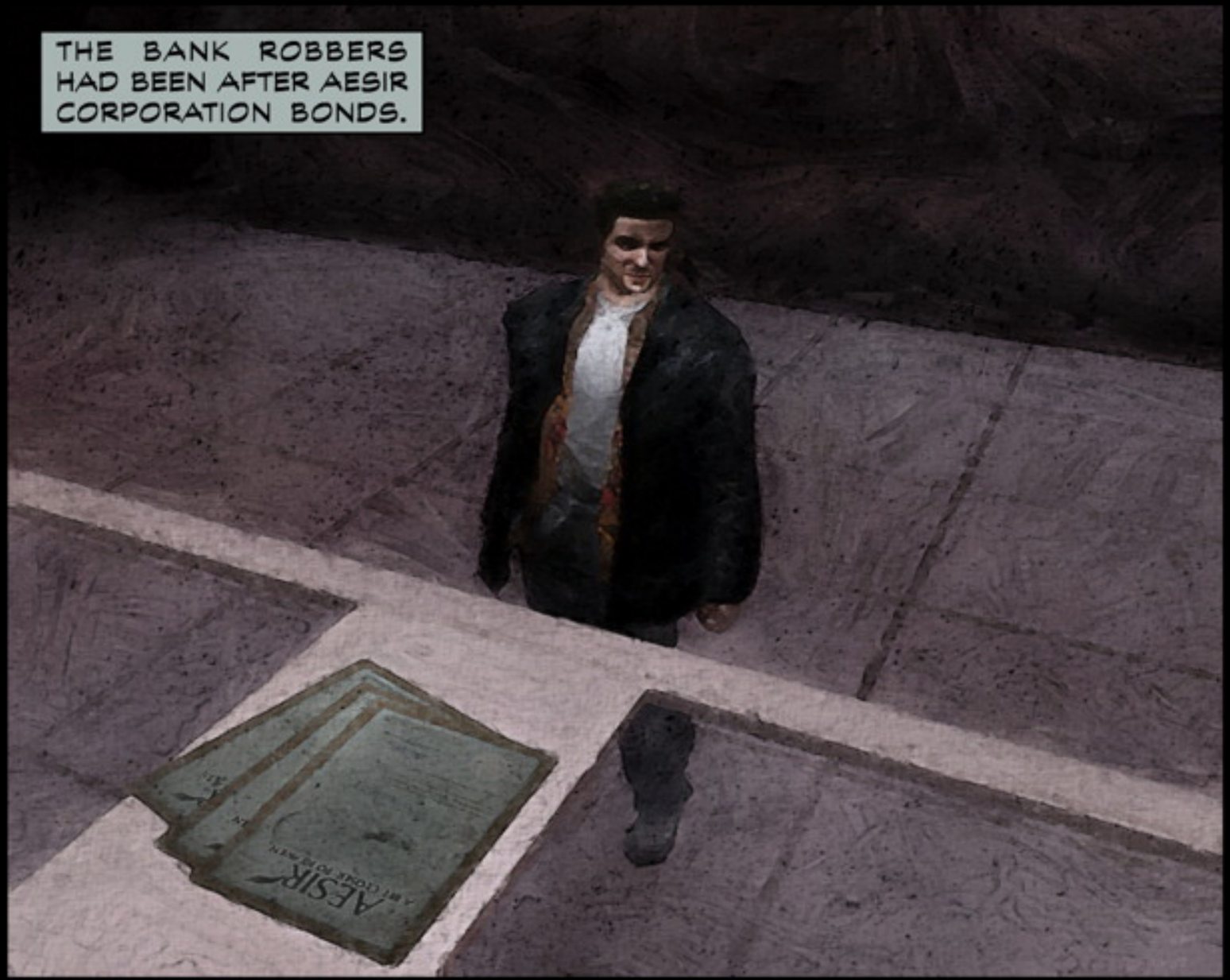
IT DIDN'T GET ANY BETTER WHEN I GOT TO THE SUBWAY.

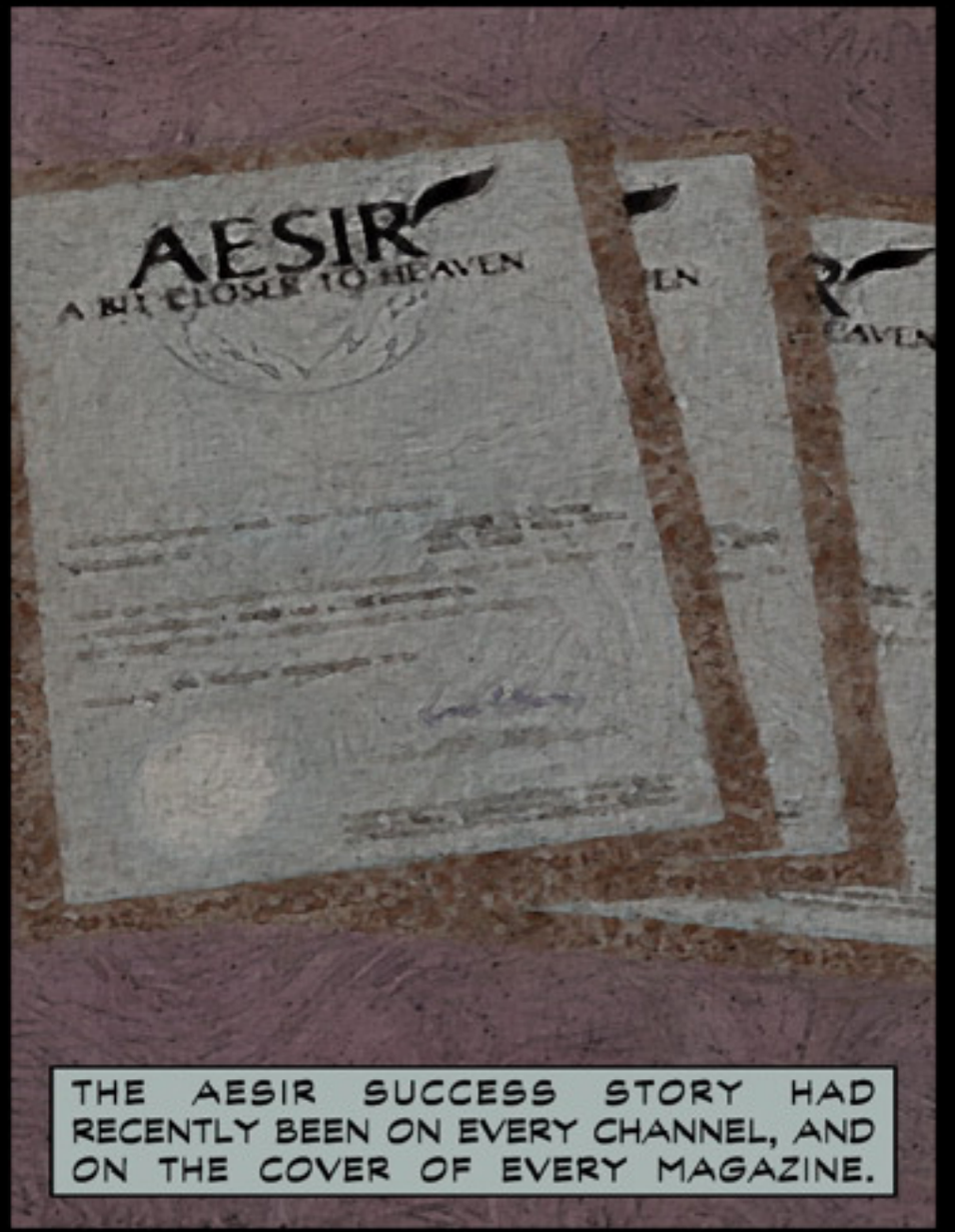
THE FEELING HIT ME LIKE A POINT-BLANK SHOT STRAIGHT IN THE FACE--
SOMETHING WAS NOT RIGHT ABOUT THIS.
MY BERETTA STIRRED NERVOUSLY UNDER MY COAT...
BUT THE TRAIN DOORS HAD ALREADY SHUT BEHIND ME, AND I WAS IN FOR THE RIDE--
NEXT STOP: ROSCOE STREET STATION, AND ALEX.

MAX PAYNE™
PART I: THE AMERICAN DREAM
Station
1 9
CHAPTER TWO: LIVE FROM THE CRIME SCENE

THE RUSTY DOOR LED TO AN ABANDONED PART OF THE STATION, CLOSED OFF SINCE THE EARLY 40s.
SOMETHING BIG WAS GOING DOWN AT ROSCOE STREET. MAYBE THAT'S WHY ALEX HAD WANTED TO MEET ME HERE. MAYBE NOT--
TICKETS
ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, I WAS GOING TO FIND OUT.

WE COME TO YOU NOW LIVE FROM THE CRIME SCENE.
WHO IS THIS?
RIGHT BACK AT YOU.
THIS IS DEPUTY CHIEF JIM BRAVURA FROM THE NYPD. YOU ARE TO CEASE YOUR CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES AND SURRENDER IMMEDIATELY.
SURE THING, JIM. ME AND THE BOYS BEEN TALKING, AND EVERYONE'S REAL SORRY. THEY'LL NEVER DO IT AGAIN.
WHO THE HELL IS THIS?
KLIK!
BEING PLACED AT THE SCENE OF A BANK ROBBERY WOULDN'T HAVE TIPPED THE ODDS IN MY FAVOR.


THE BANK ROBBERS HAD BEEN AFTER AESIR CORPORATION BONDS.

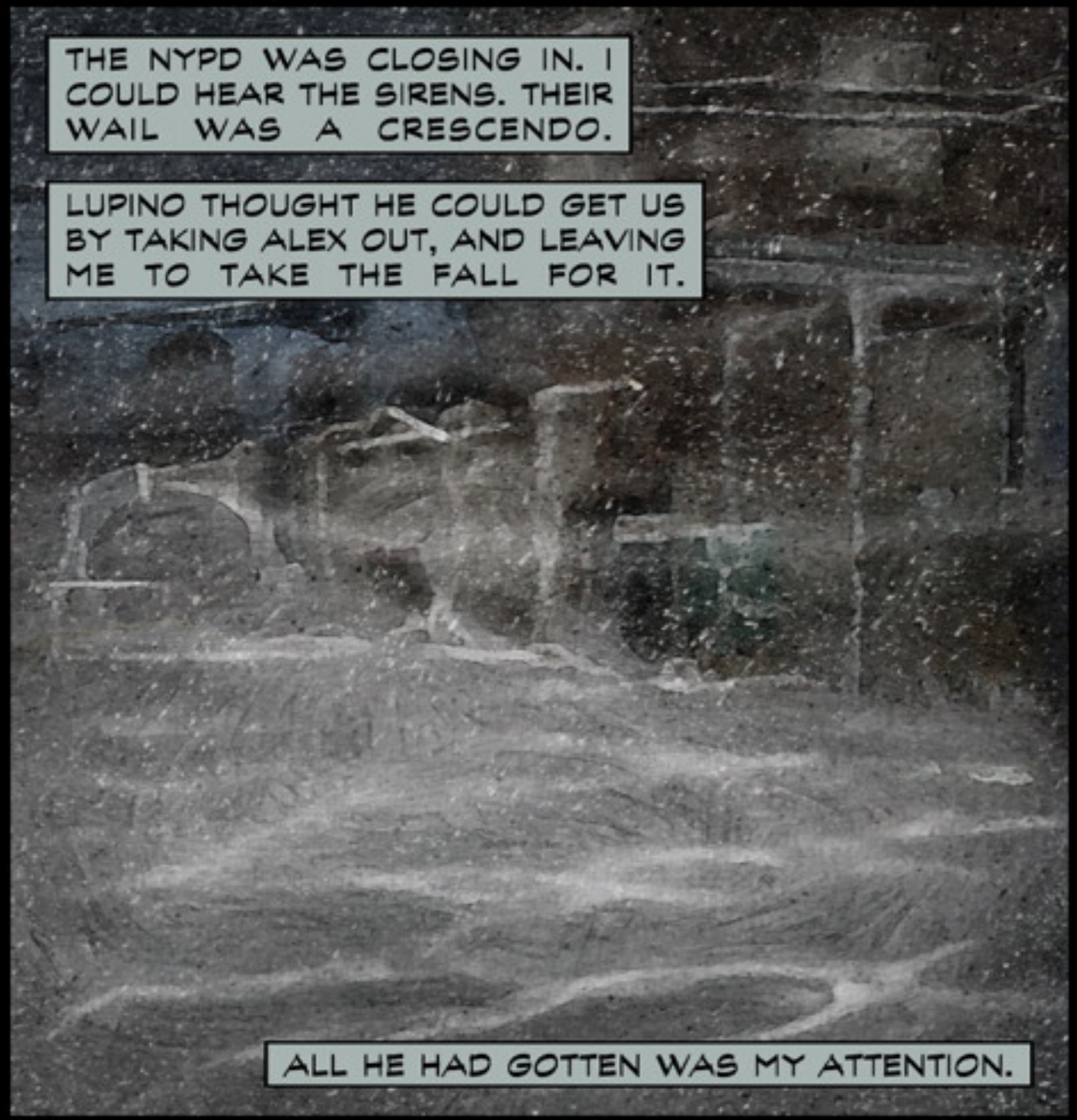

AESIR
A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN
THE AESIR SUCCESS STORY HAD RECENTLY BEEN ON EVERY CHANNEL, AND ON THE COVER OF EVERY MAGAZINE.

ALEX HAD KEPT ME RELATIVELY SANE FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS.
NOW I DIDN'T KNOW HOW I FELT.

SOMEHOW HE HAD STUMBLED UPON SOMETHING BIG--
AND ENDED UP STEPPING ON JACK LUPINO'S TOES.

MAX PAYNE™
PART I: THE AMERICAN DREAM
CHAPTER THREE: PLAYING IT BOGART

LUPINO RAN HIS RACKET OF SEX, DRUGS AND CONTRACT KILLINGS FROM A SLEAZY HOTEL AND A SLUM BLOCK OF TENEMENTS.


THE NYPD WAS CLOSING IN. I COULD HEAR THE SIRENS. THEIR WAIL WAS A CRESCENDO.
LUPINO THOUGHT HE COULD GET US BY TAKING ALEX OUT, AND LEAVING ME TO TAKE THE FALL FOR IT.
ALL HE HAD GOTTEN WAS MY ATTENTION.

I WENT FOR THE HOTEL FIRST.

IT WAS A SAD OLD THING, WITH FLICKERING LAMPS AND FADED COLORS, CHEAP MOBSTER PUNKS AND TIRED-EYED PROSTITUTES.

I WALKED STRAIGHT IN, PLAYING IT BOGART, LIKE I'D DONE A HUNDRED TIMES BEFORE.

THE PLACE WAS RUN BY A COUPLE OF MURDERING MOBSTERS, WITH SHARK SMILES...

THE FINITO BROTHERS.

LADIES AN' GENTLEMEN, IT'S THE PAIN IN THE BUTT.

PAIN TO THE MAX!

YOU'RE KILLING ME. DID YOU MAKE THAT UP YOURSELVES OR DID YOU GET SOME WINO DOWN-STAIRS TO COME UP WITH IT?

DON'T ANSWER THAT. A RHETORICAL QUESTION.
I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR THE BOSS. LUPINO AROUND?
THAT KINDA DEPENDS ON WHO'S ASKIN', A FRIEND--
OR A JUNK SQUAD PLANT? DON'T ANSWER, IT'S ONE OF 'EM, HOW'D YA PUT IT, RHETORICAL QUESTIONS.
LUPINO AIN'T HERE, BUT HE SAYS "BYE."

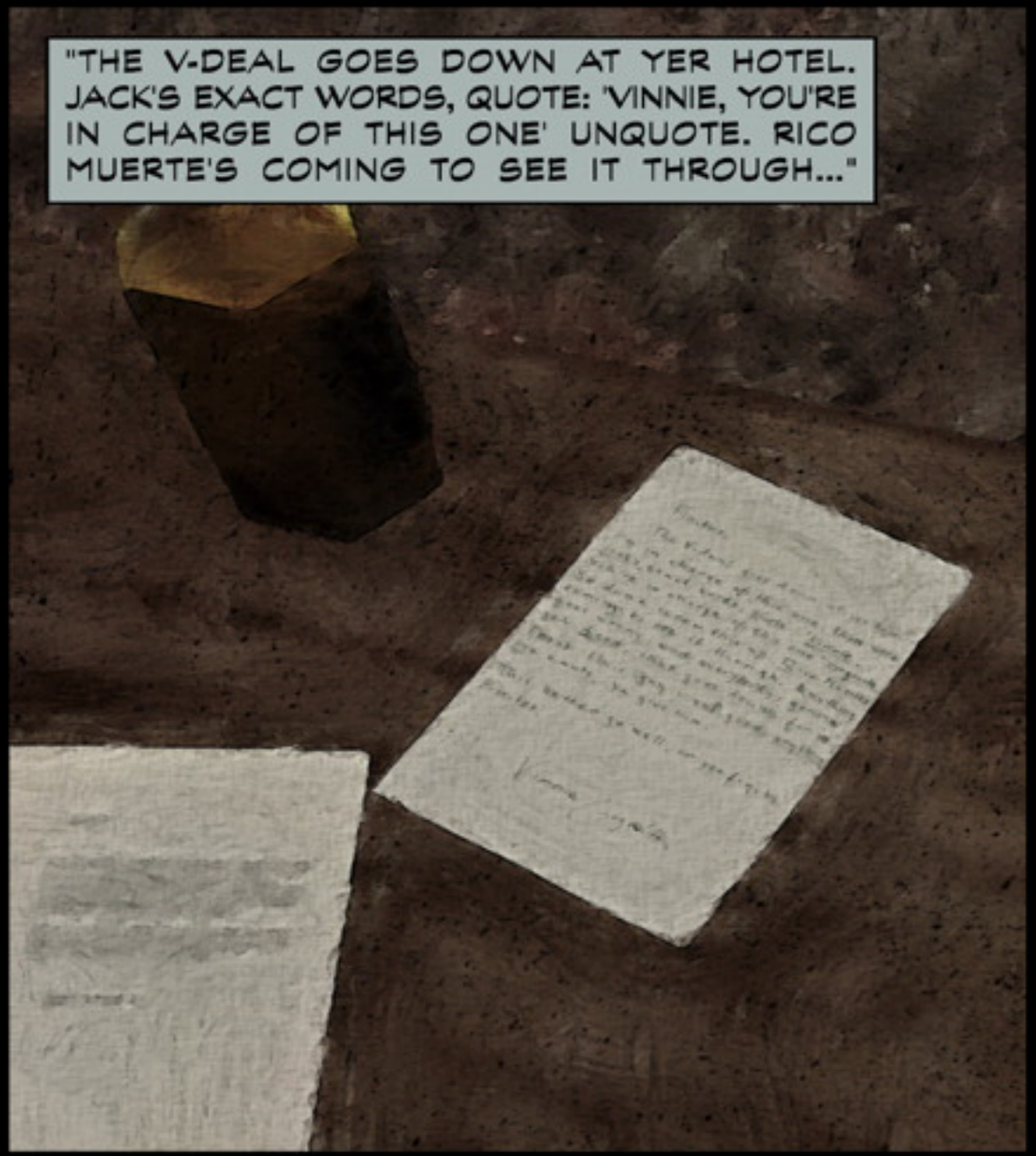
LUPINO WASN'T IN HIS CHEAP HOTEL. INSTEAD I RAN INTO THE FINITO BROTHERS.
HOTEL
MY COVER HAD BEEN BLOWN. THE DOORS SLAMMED SHUT BEHIND ME--
AND THEN I WAS DODGING BULLETS LIKE RAINDROPS.

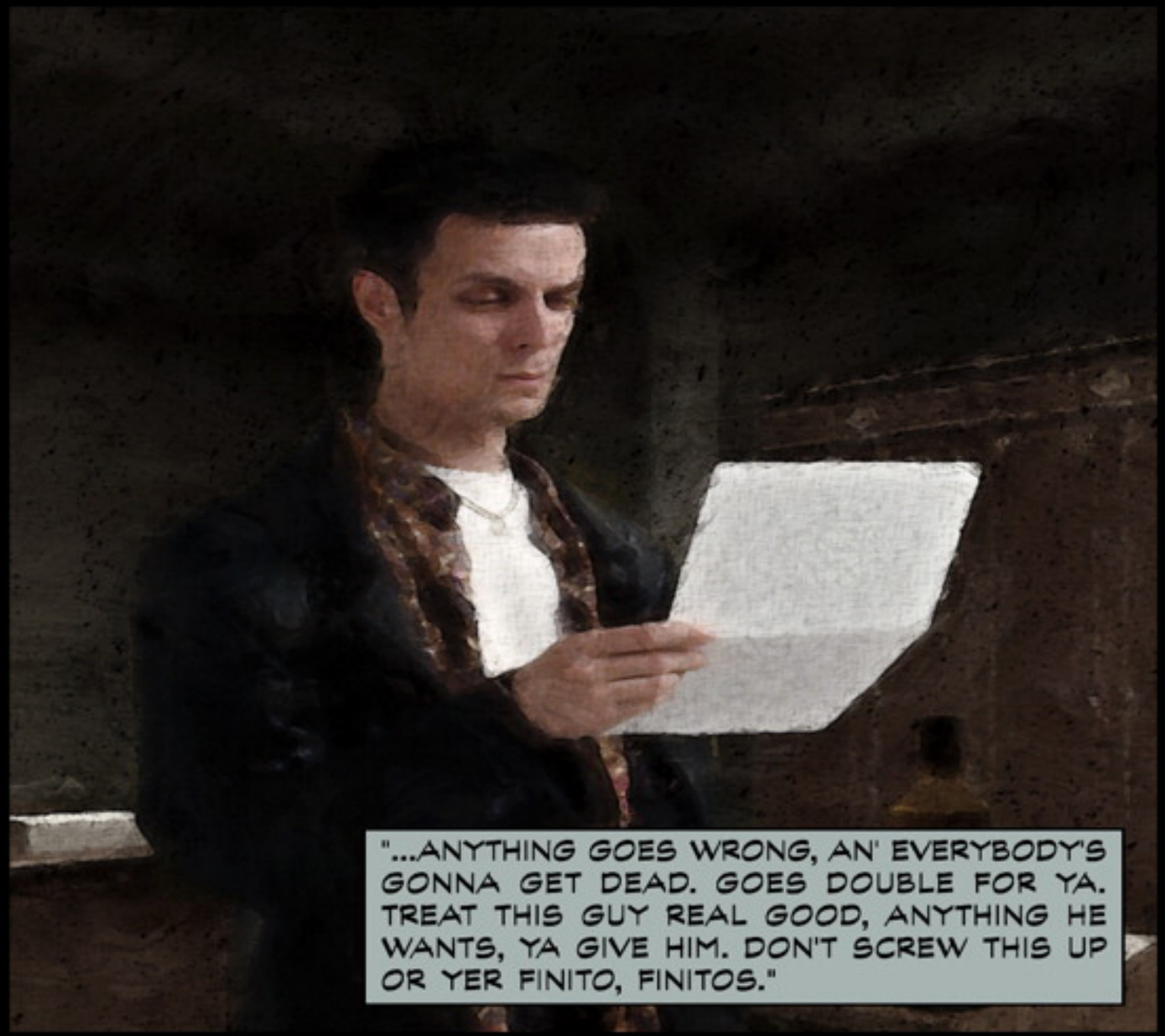
I HAD MET LUPINO ONLY ONCE. THE GANGSTER RAN ALL HIS RACKETS THROUGH HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, VINNIE GOGNITTI.

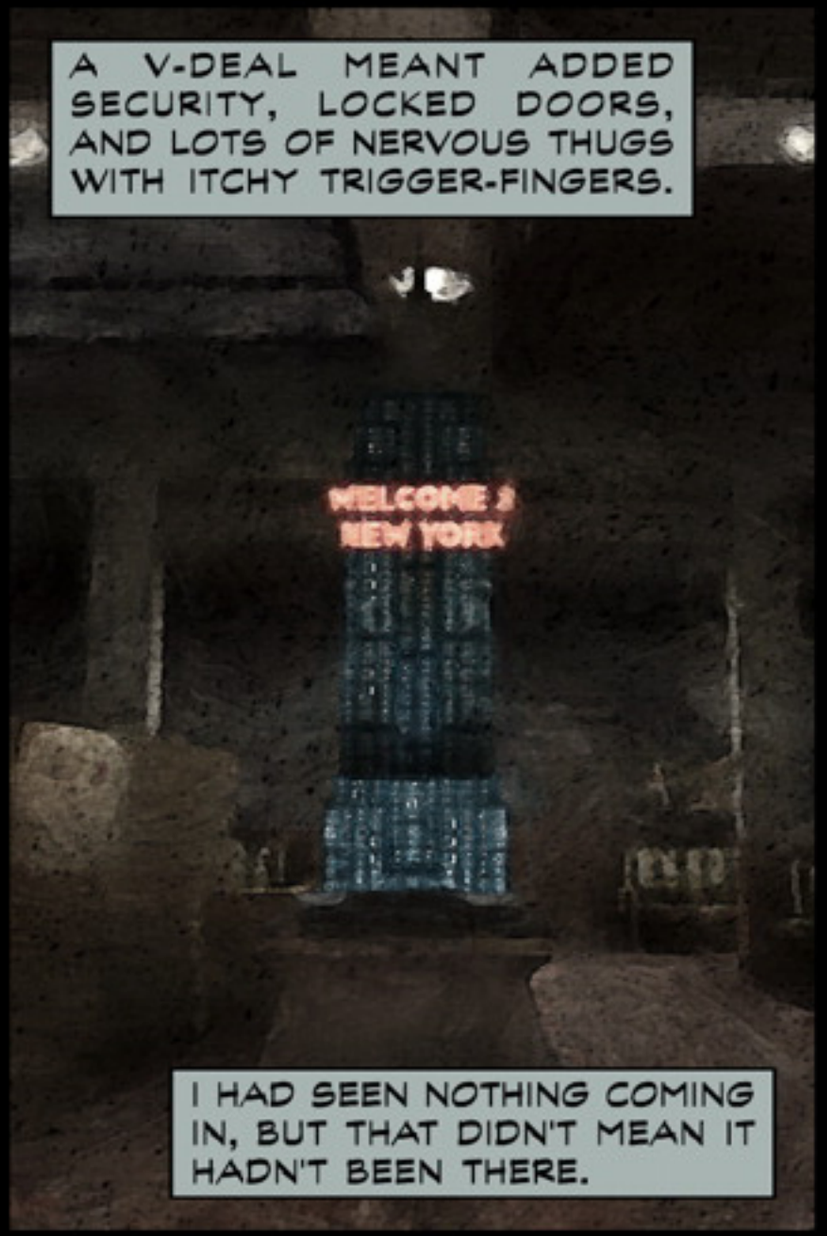
GOGNITTI WAS A HIGH-STRUNG WHINER ON THE VERGE OF BREAKING APART LIKE AN OVERAMPED ENERGIZER BUNNY.

HE HAD THE BRAINS TO RUN THE BUSINESS BUT HE LACKED THE BALLS, ALWAYS FALLING SHORT--

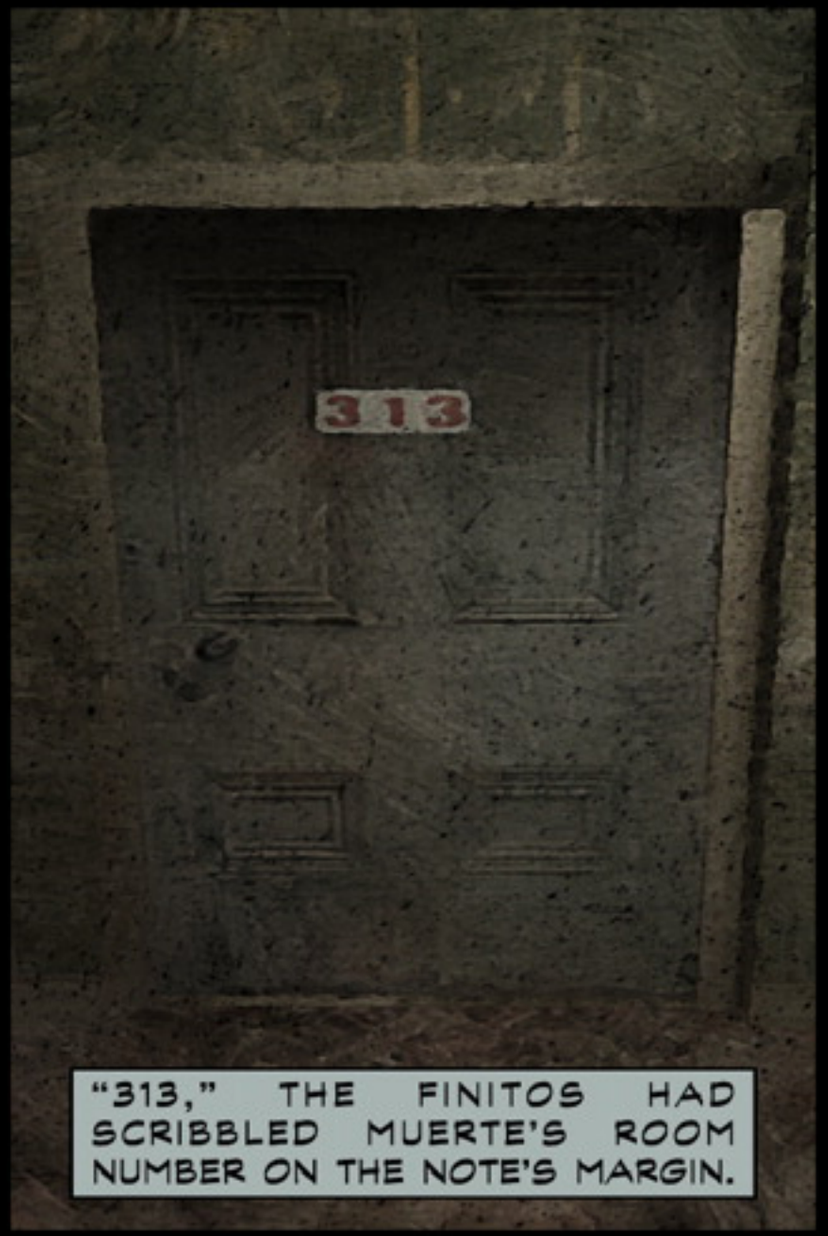
TAKING HIS FRUSTRATION OUT ON UNDER-AGED ADDICTS AND CALL GIRLS.

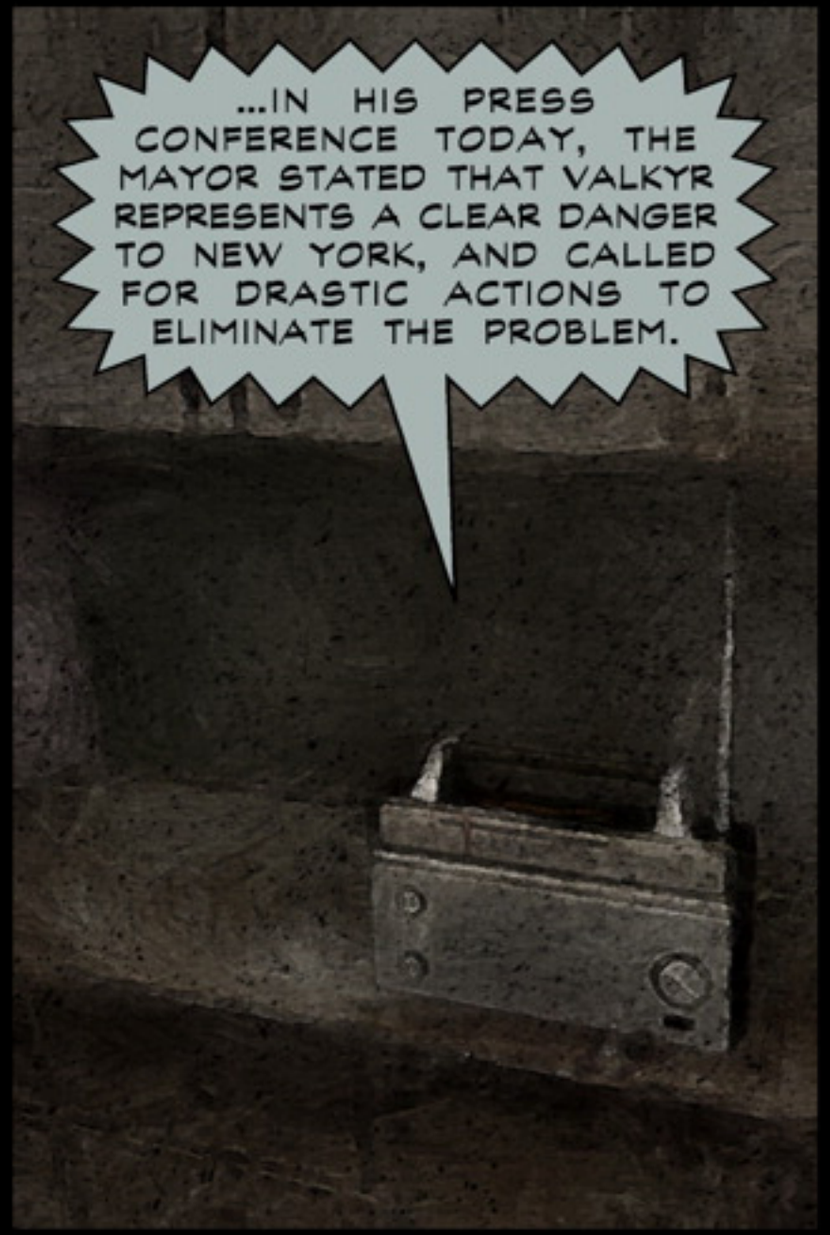

"THE V-DEAL GOES DOWN AT YER HOTEL. JACK'S EXACT WORDS, QUOTE: 'VINNIE, YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF THIS ONE' UNQUOTE. RICO MUERTE'S COMING TO SEE IT THROUGH..."


"...ANYTHING GOES WRONG, AN' EVERYBODY'S GONNA GET DEAD. GOES DOUBLE FOR YA. TREAT THIS GUY REAL GOOD, ANYTHING HE WANTS, YA GIVE HIM. DON'T SCREW THIS UP OR YER FINITO, FINITOS."

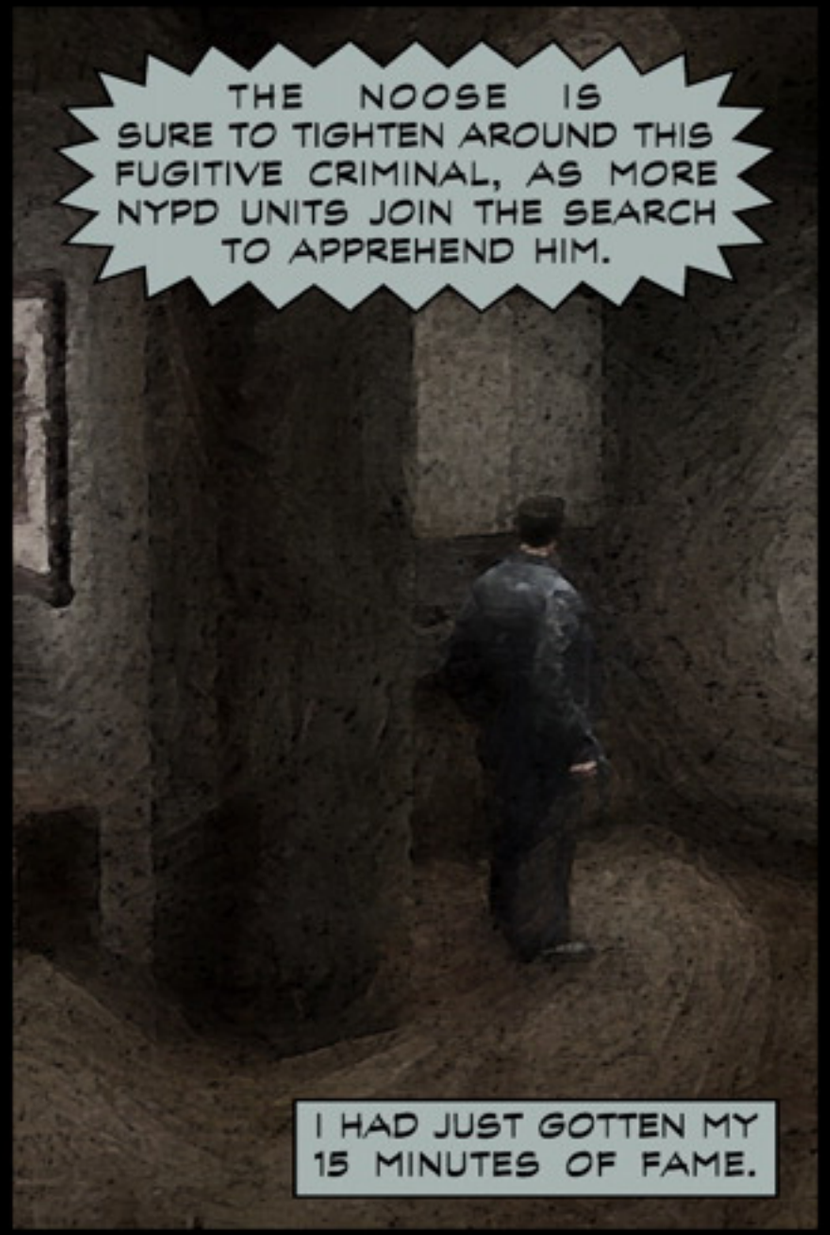

A V-DEAL MEANT ADDED SECURITY, LOCKED DOORS, AND LOTS OF NERVOUS THUGS WITH ITCHY TRIGGER-FINGERS.
WELCOME TO NEW YORK
I HAD SEEN NOTHING COMING IN, BUT THAT DIDN'T MEAN IT HADN'T BEEN THERE.

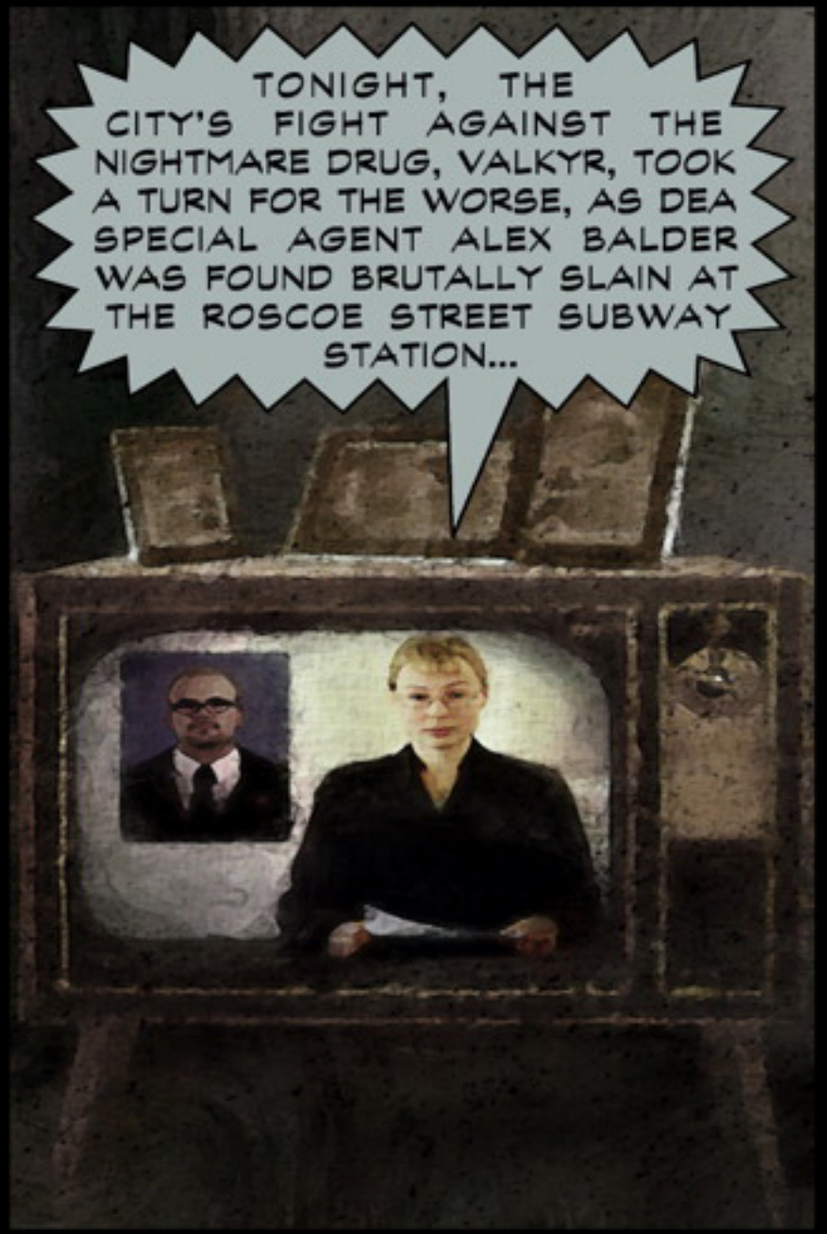
RICO MUERTE WAS A REGULAR KEYSER SOZE, A SPOOK STORY TOLD TO KEEP THE APES IN LINE.


313
"313," THE FINITOS HAD SCRIBBLED MUERTE'S ROOM NUMBER ON THE NOTE'S MARGIN.


...IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY, THE MAYOR STATED THAT VALKYR REPRESENTS A CLEAR DANGER TO NEW YORK, AND CALLED FOR DRASTIC ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE PROBLEM.

ON TODAY'S TOP STORY, THE VALKYR CRISIS WORSENS WITH THE MURDER OF DEA SPECIAL AGENT ALEX BALDER. SPECIAL AGENT BALDER HAD BEEN SHOT REPEATEDLY FROM A POINT-BLANK RANGE.
THE GUNMAN HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS MAX PAYNE.

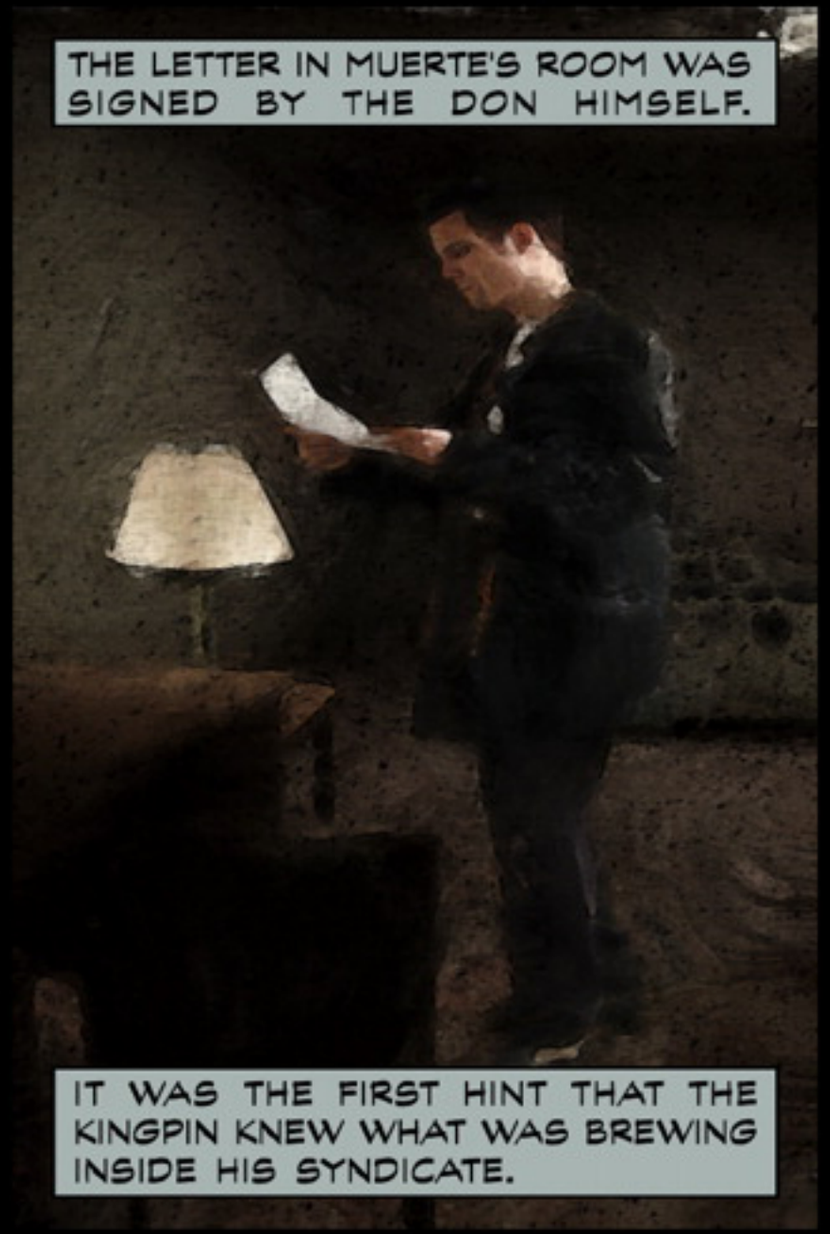

THE NOOSE IS SURE TO TIGHTEN AROUND THIS FUGITIVE CRIMINAL, AS MORE NYPD UNITS JOIN THE SEARCH TO APPREHEND HIM.
I HAD JUST GOTTEN MY 15 MINUTES OF FAME.


TONIGHT, THE CITY'S FIGHT AGAINST THE NIGHTMARE DRUG, VALKYR, TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE, AS DEA SPECIAL AGENT ALEX BALDER WAS FOUND BRUTALLY SLAIN AT THE ROSCOE STREET SUBWAY STATION...

A SUSPECT WAS SEEN LEAVING THE SITE ONLY MOMENTS AFTER THE SHOTS HAD BEEN FIRED, AND THE NYPD IS CURRENTLY IN PURSUIT OF MAX PAYNE, A REPEATED FELON, BELIEVED TO BE ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS...

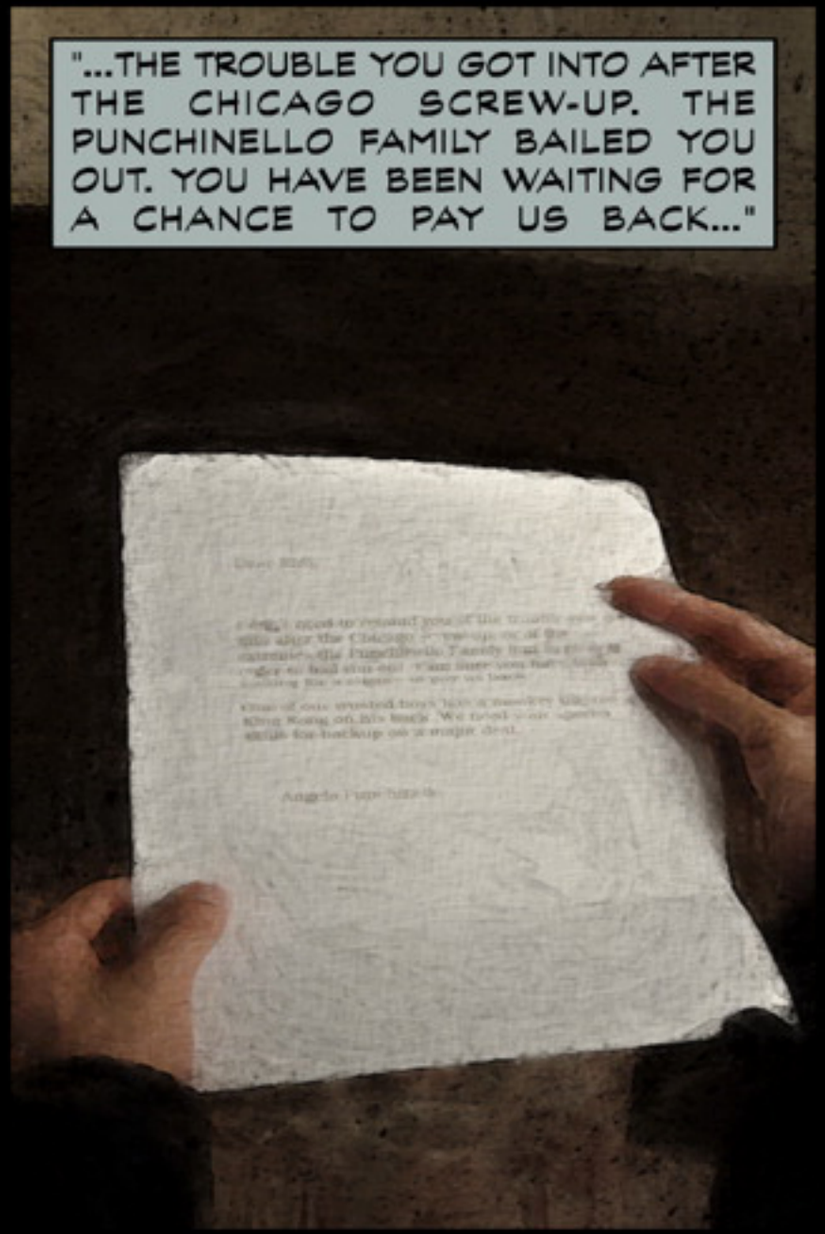
AND NOW THE WEATHER. THE WORST WINTER STORM IN RECORDED HISTORY CONTINUES TO POUND THE CITY...

OUR INVESTIGATION HAD TURNED UP NOTHING TO LINK ANGELO PUNCHINELLO, THE HEAD OF THE PUNCHINELLO FAMILY, TO VALKYR. ALL TRACKS HAD ENDED WITH JACK LUPINO.

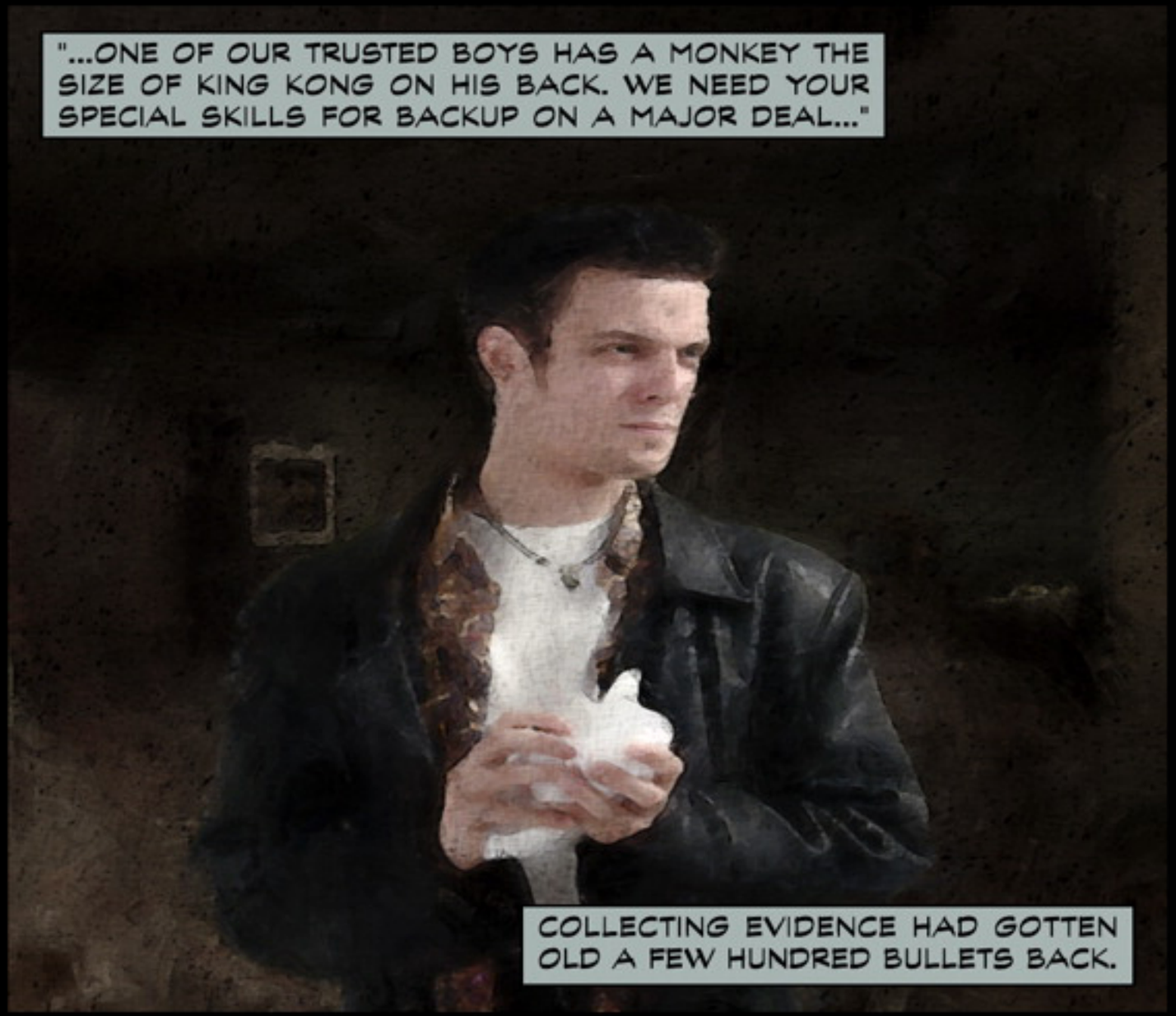


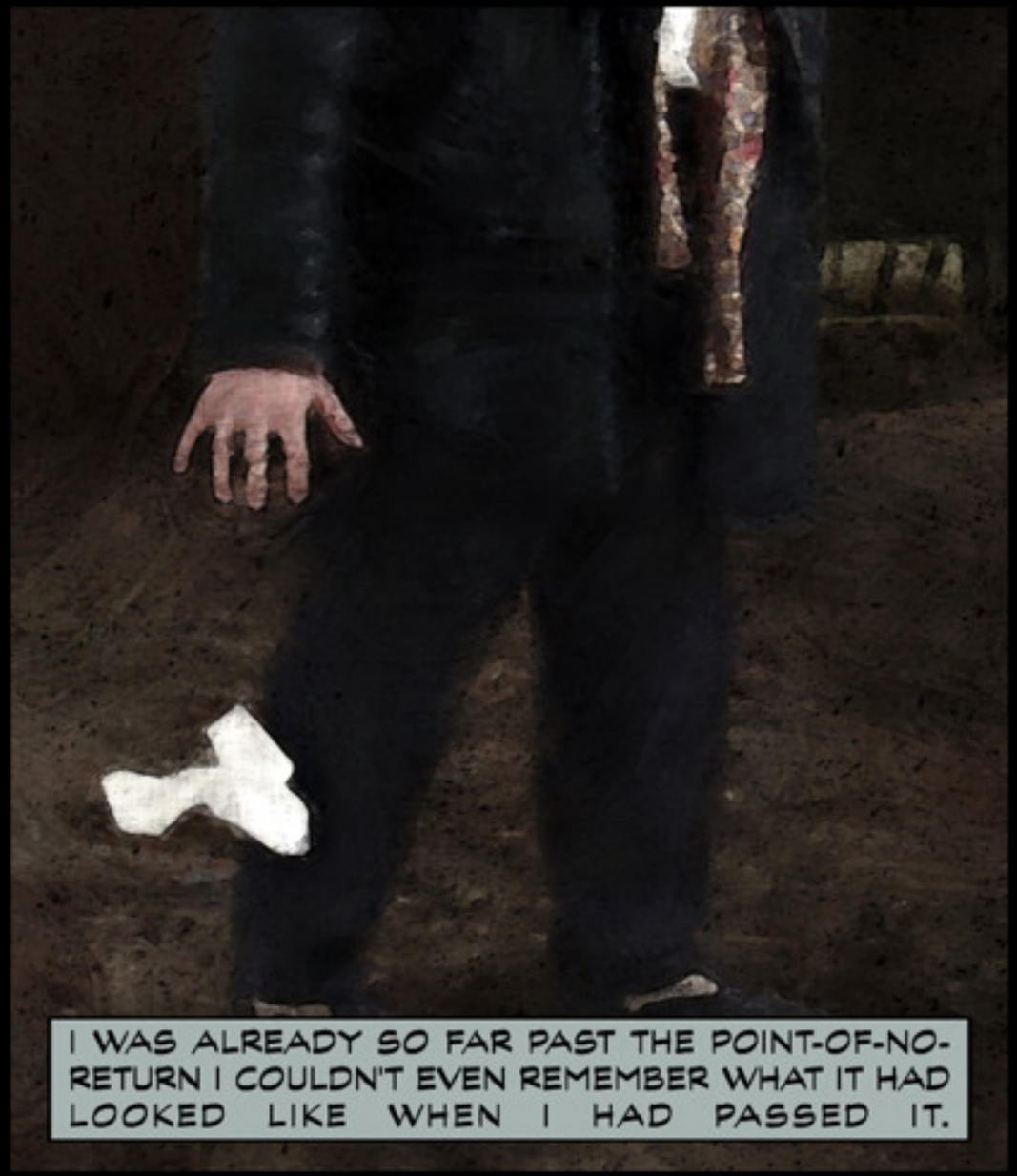
THE LETTER IN MUERTE'S ROOM WAS SIGNED BY THE DON HIMSELF.

IT WAS THE FIRST HINT THAT THE KINGPIN KNEW WHAT WAS BREWING INSIDE HIS SYNDICATE.



"...THE TROUBLE YOU GOT INTO AFTER THE CHICAGO SCREW-UP. THE PUNCHINELLO FAMILY BAILED YOU OUT. YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR A CHANCE TO PAY US BACK..."


"...ONE OF OUR TRUSTED BOYS HAS A MONKEY THE SIZE OF KING KONG ON HIS BACK. WE NEED YOUR SPECIAL SKILLS FOR BACKUP ON A MAJOR DEAL..."
COLLECTING EVIDENCE HAD GOTTEN OLD A FEW HUNDRED BULLETS BACK.


I WAS ALREADY SO FAR PAST THE POINT-OF-NO-RETURN I COULDN'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT IT HAD LOOKED LIKE WHEN I HAD PASSED IT.

MAX PAYNE™
PART I: THE AMERICAN DREAM
CHAPTER FOUR: THE BLOOD VEINS OF NEW YORK

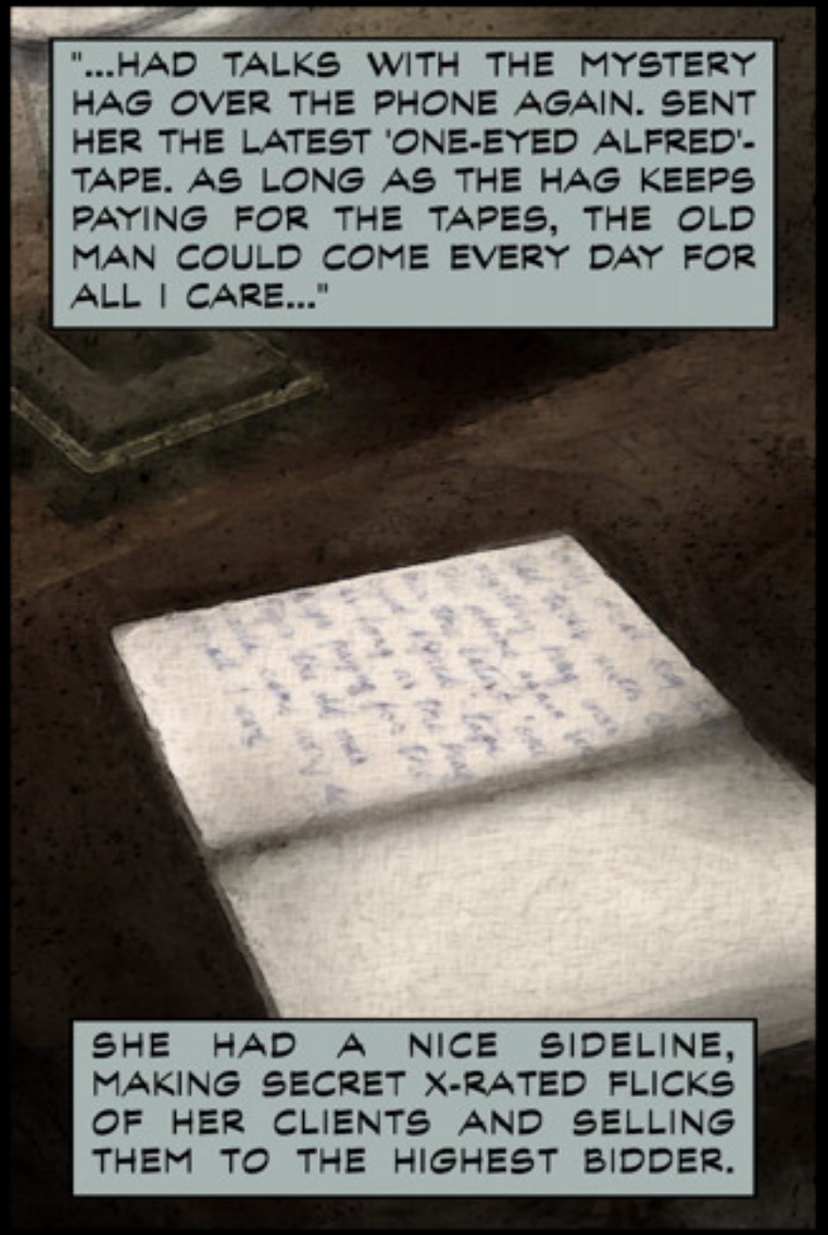
THE OLD SERVICE ELEVATOR RUMBLED DOWN TO THE BOWELS OF JACK LUPINO'S HOTEL.

...A WINTER STORM WARNING IS IN EFFECT IN THE WHOLE TRI-STATE AREA AS BOTH FREEZING RAIN AND HEAVY SNOWFALL CONTINUE. MANY ROADWAYS ARE ALREADY CLOSED, AND PEOPLE ARE ADVISED TO STAY INDOORS. THE SEVERE BLIZZARD HAS RAVAGED NEW YORK FOR THREE DAYS NOW WITH NO END IN SIGHT...

WE HAD BEEN SNOWED FROM THE START IN THE VALKYR CASE, AND THE FORECAST SAID THERE WAS PLENTY MORE WHERE THAT HAD COME FROM.

NEW YORK
BUT THE SNOWBOUND CITY WAS ON MY SIDE. LESS CHANCE OF INNOCENT BYSTANDERS GETTING CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE.

THE DIARY BELONGED TO A HOOKER NAMED CANDY DAWN.
THE READ WOULD HAVE MADE A VICE COP BLUSH.


"...HAD TALKS WITH THE MYSTERY HAG OVER THE PHONE AGAIN. SENT HER THE LATEST 'ONE-EYED ALFRED'-TAPE. AS LONG AS THE HAG KEEPS PAYING FOR THE TAPES, THE OLD MAN COULD COME EVERY DAY FOR ALL I CARE..."
SHE HAD A NICE SIDELINE, MAKING SECRET X-RATED FLICKS OF HER CLIENTS AND SELLING THEM TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.

IT WOULD GET HER KILLED, IF HER V-FIX FOR THE DAY DIDN'T DO IT FIRST.

A DEAD MAN TIED TO A CHAIR LAY ON THE BOILER ROOM FLOOR.

THE MURDER WEAPON WAS A BASEBALL BAT, NOW LYING IN A POOL OF DRYING BLOOD, NEXT TO A NEWSPAPER FOLDED OPEN ON A "CAPTAIN BASEBALLBAT-BOY" COMIC STRIP.

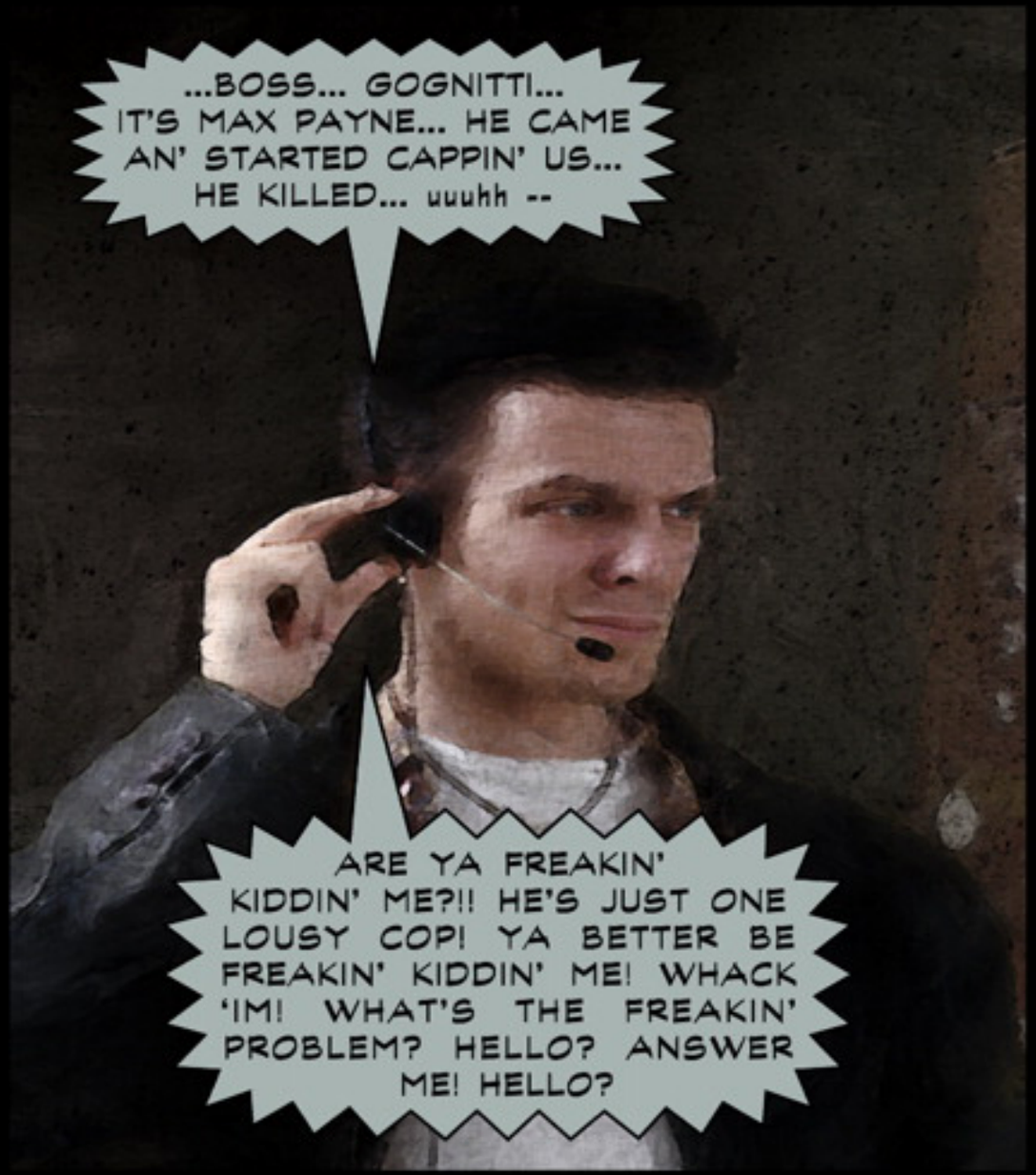
...TWO MAD DOG KILLERS, READY TO MURDER EACH OTHER.
THEY STEP INTO THE NEXT ROOM, AN' I'M THINKIN', NOW THEY GONNA DO IT.
MMPPHH...
BUT NO! THEY SIT DOWN IN FRONT OF A TV AN' SOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH A KUNG-FU FIGHTIN' VIDEOGAME.
I TELL YOU, CANDY. I WAS SO DEPRESSED I STRANGLED THEM BOTH WITH THE VIDEOGAME CABLES.
OH RICO, YOU'RE SO BAD.
I AM, AIN'T I?
MMM-MMMM...

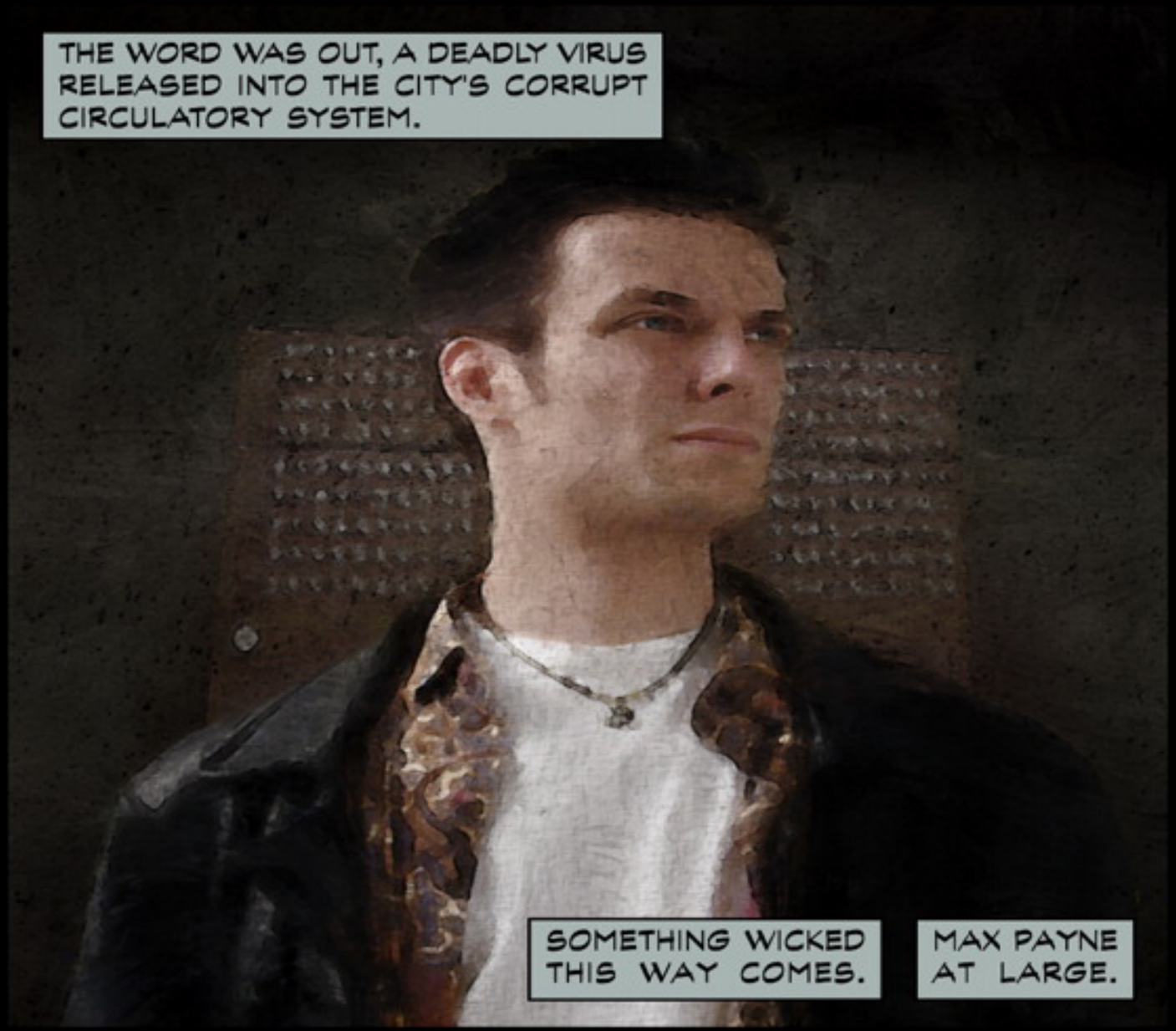
RICO MUERTE. BIG-TIME HUSTLER.
WHO THE HELL?!!
IT'S THAT COP!
MUERTE WENT FOR HIS GUN.

THERE WAS AN OLD TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD IN THE BACKROOM OF THE RECEPTION AREA. THE KIND THAT MADE PHONE TAPPING CHILD'S PLAY.

IT WASN'T HARD TO PICTURE A FAT PIMP SWEATING WITH HEADPHONES ON, LISTENING TO HIS HOOKERS TALK DIRTY AND FAKE ORGASMS OVER THE WEB OF PARTY LINES; THE BLOOD VEINS OF NEW YORK.

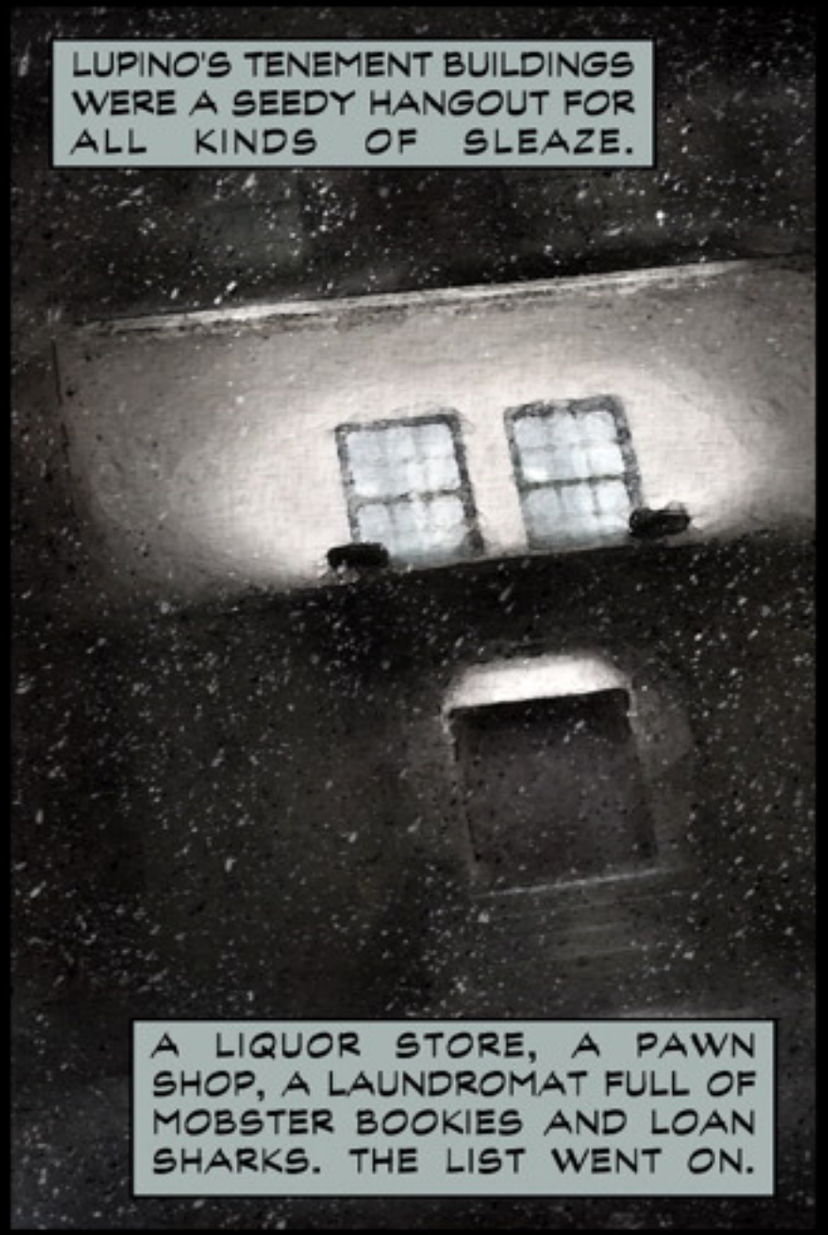
RIGHT NOW, THERE WAS A DIFFERENT SET OF MOANS AND GROANS GOING ON...


...BOSS... GOGNITTI... IT'S MAX PAYNE... HE CAME AN' STARTED CAPPIN' US... HE KILLED... uuuhh --
ARE YA FREAKIN' KIDDIN' ME?!! HE'S JUST ONE LOUSY COP! YA BETTER BE FREAKIN' KIDDIN' ME! WHACK 'IM! WHAT'S THE FREAKIN' PROBLEM? HELLO? ANSWER ME! HELLO?

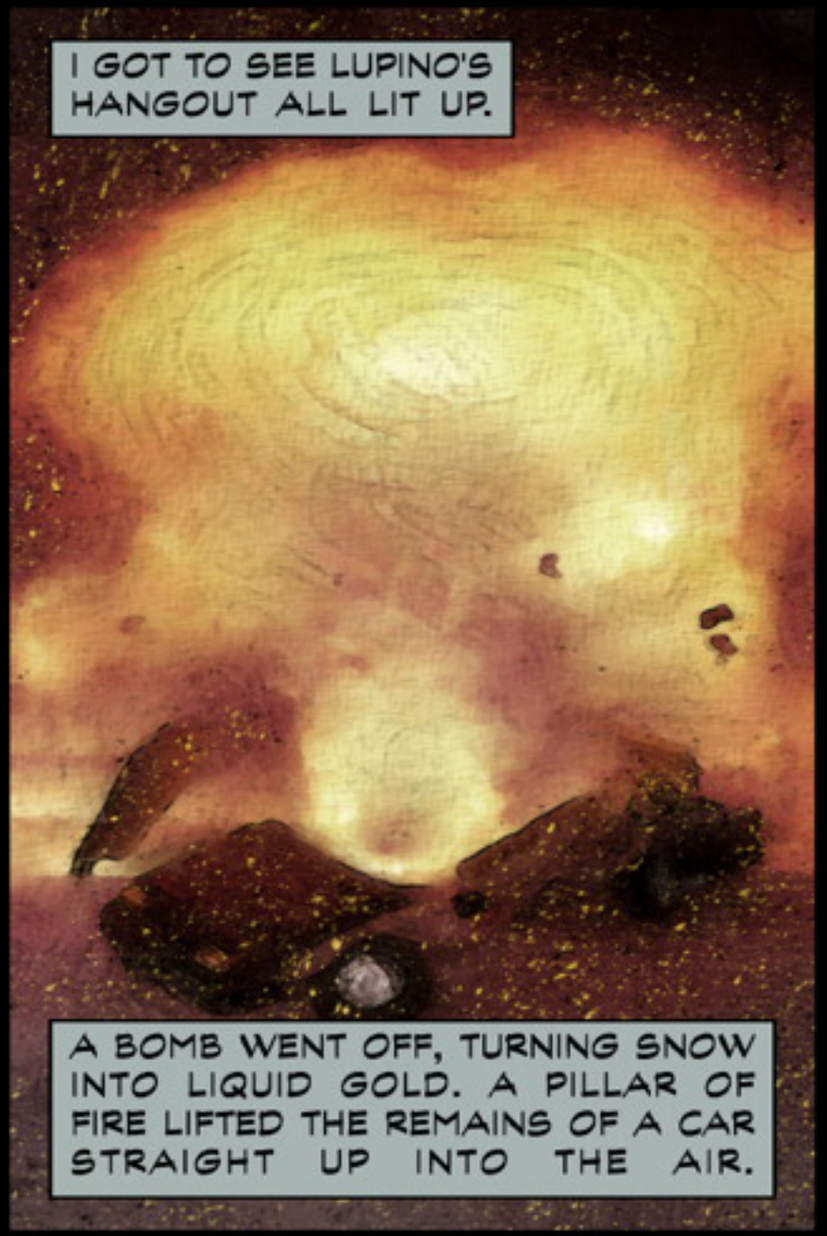

THE WORD WAS OUT, A DEADLY VIRUS RELEASED INTO THE CITY'S CORRUPT CIRCULATORY SYSTEM.
SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES.
MAX PAYNE AT LARGE.

MAX PAYNE™
PART I: THE AMERICAN DREAM
CHAPTER FIVE: LET THE GUN DO THE TALKING

TURN AROUND, WALK AWAY, BLOW TOWN. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SMART THING TO DO.
HOTEL
GUESS I WASN'T THAT SMART.

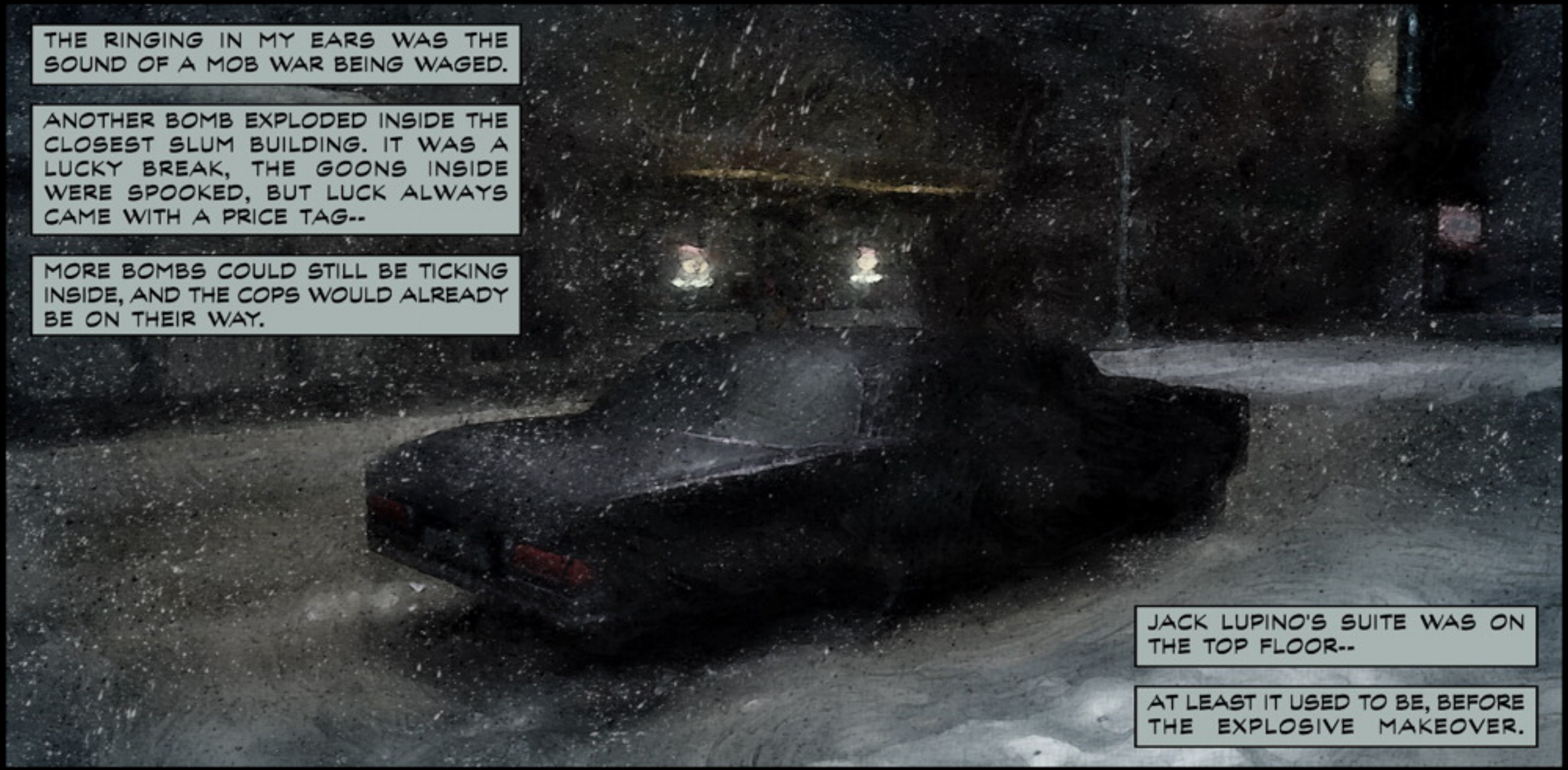

LUPINO'S TENEMENT BUILDINGS WERE A SEEDY HANGOUT FOR ALL KINDS OF SLEAZE.
A LIQUOR STORE, A PAWN SHOP, A LAUNDROMAT FULL OF MOBSTER BOOKIES AND LOAN SHARKS. THE LIST WENT ON.

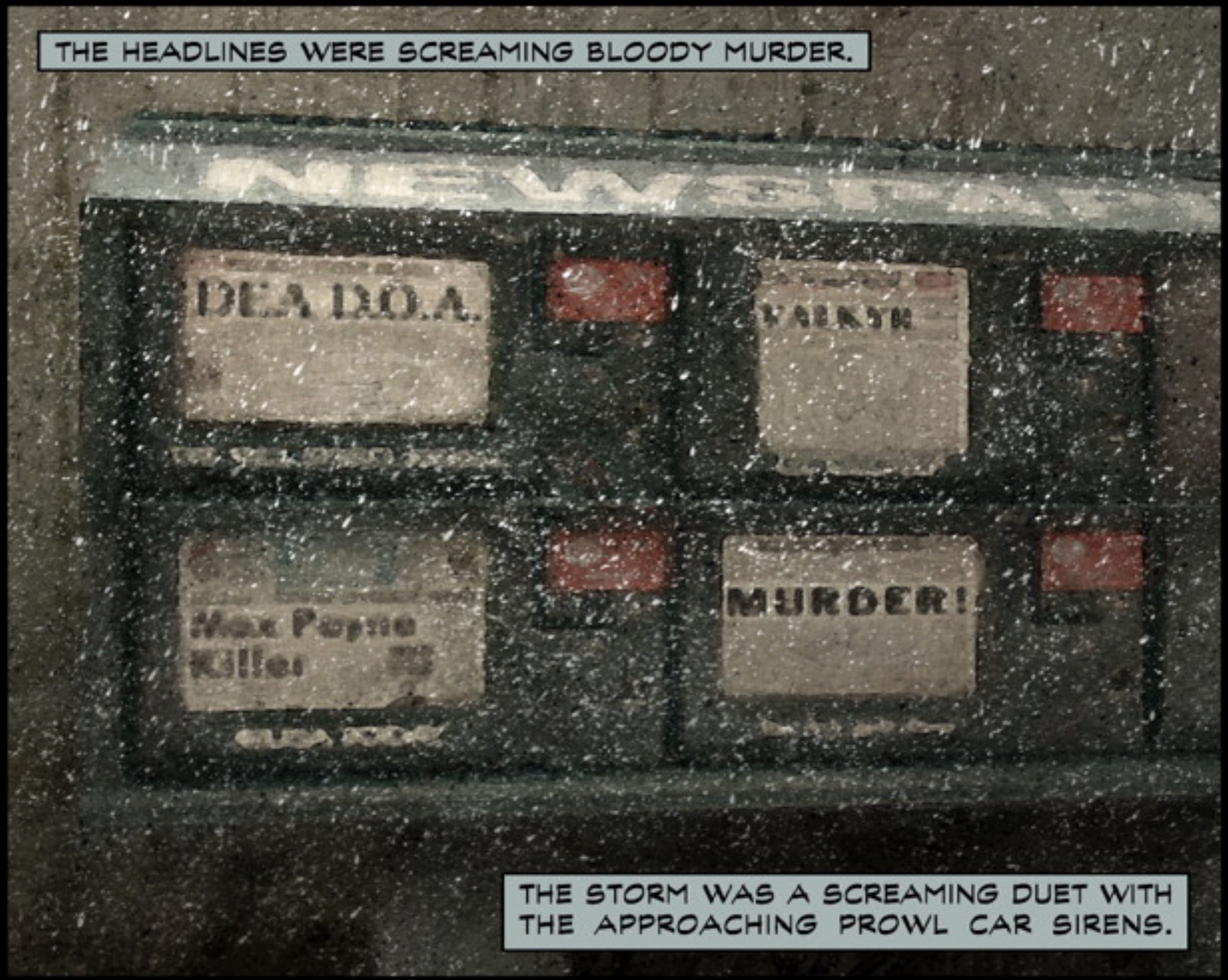
THE HOW AND WHY OF IT WAS A MYSTERY TO ME, BUT THEY KNEW I WAS A COP.
THEY KNEW I WAS COMING, AND THEY WERE GOING TO GET REAL TRIGGER-HAPPY ABOUT IT.


I GOT TO SEE LUPINO'S HANGOUT ALL LIT UP.
A BOMB WENT OFF, TURNING SNOW INTO LIQUID GOLD. A PILLAR OF FIRE LIFTED THE REMAINS OF A CAR STRAIGHT UP INTO THE AIR.

THE FLAMES WERE HIGHLIGHTED ON THE HOOD OF A BLACK MERCEDES BENZ, AS IT COASTED DOWN THE STREET, REAL SLOW. AS IF THE DRIVER DIDN'T HAVE A WORRY IN THE WORLD.
I GOT A GOOD LOOK OF THE MAN RIDING SHOTGUN-

IT WAS VLADIMIR, THE HEAD OF THE LOCAL RUSSIAN MOB, THE FLY IN DON PUNCHINELLO'S SOUP.


THE RINGING IN MY EARS WAS THE SOUND OF A MOB WAR BEING WAGED.
ANOTHER BOMB EXPLODED INSIDE THE CLOSEST SLUM BUILDING. IT WAS A LUCKY BREAK, THE GOONS INSIDE WERE SPOOKED, BUT LUCK ALWAYS CAME WITH A PRICE TAG--
MORE BOMBS COULD STILL BE TICKING INSIDE, AND THE COPS WOULD ALREADY BE ON THEIR WAY.
JACK LUPINO'S SUITE WAS ON THE TOP FLOOR--
AT LEAST IT USED TO BE, BEFORE THE EXPLOSIVE MAKEOVER.

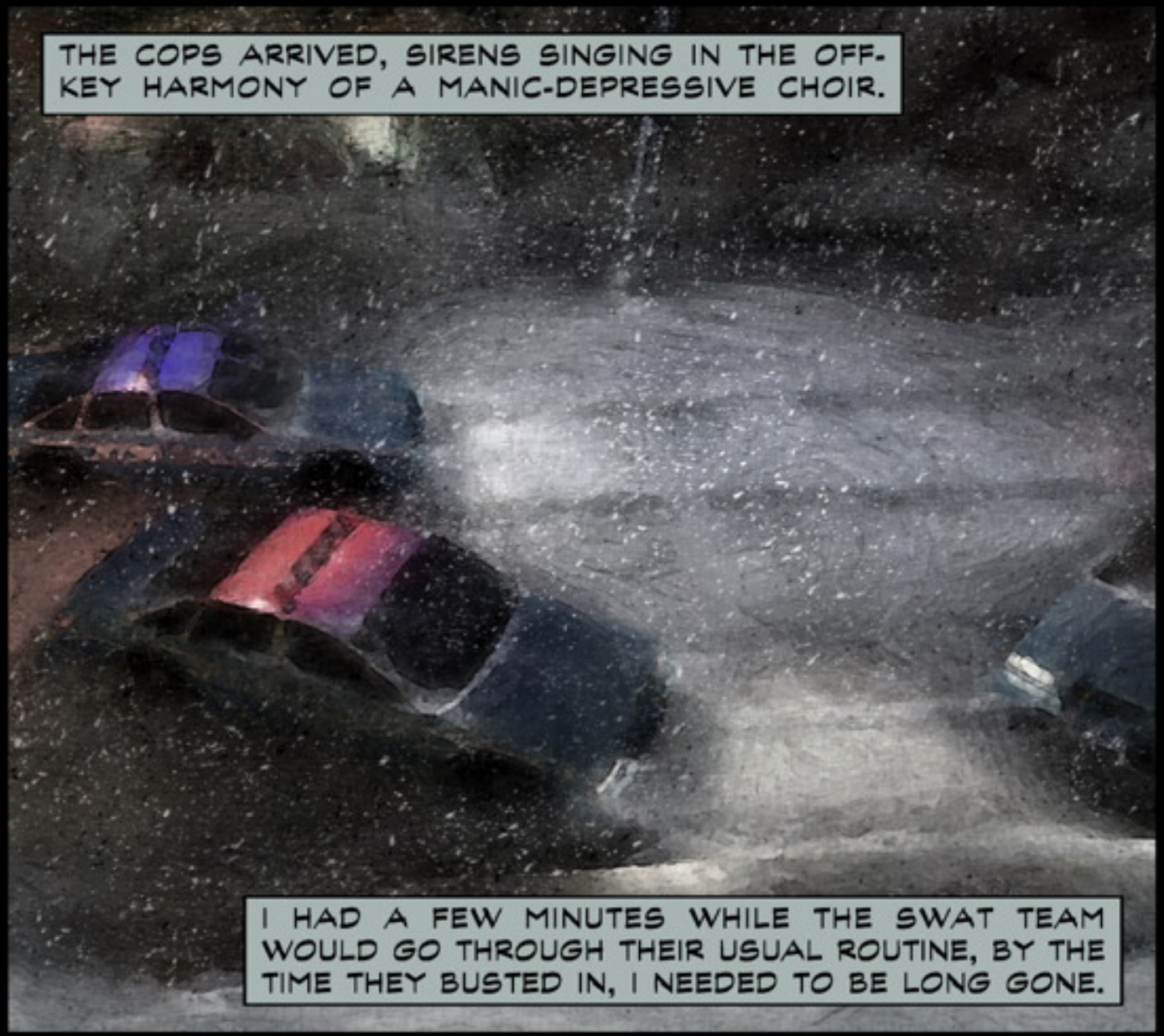

THE HEADLINES WERE SCREAMING BLOODY MURDER.
DEA D.O.A.
MURDER!
THE STORM WAS A SCREAMING DUET WITH THE APPROACHING PROWL CAR SIRENS.

IT WAS ALL A SCREAM, WHEN YOU WERE DOWN FOR THE COUNT AND WANTED FOR MURDER.

A BEATEN UP PHONE IN THE ENTRANCE HALL WAS RINGING.
IT COULD HAVE BEEN JUST A JUNKIE IN NEED OF A FIX, BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE SOMETHING MORE SINISTER THAN THAT.

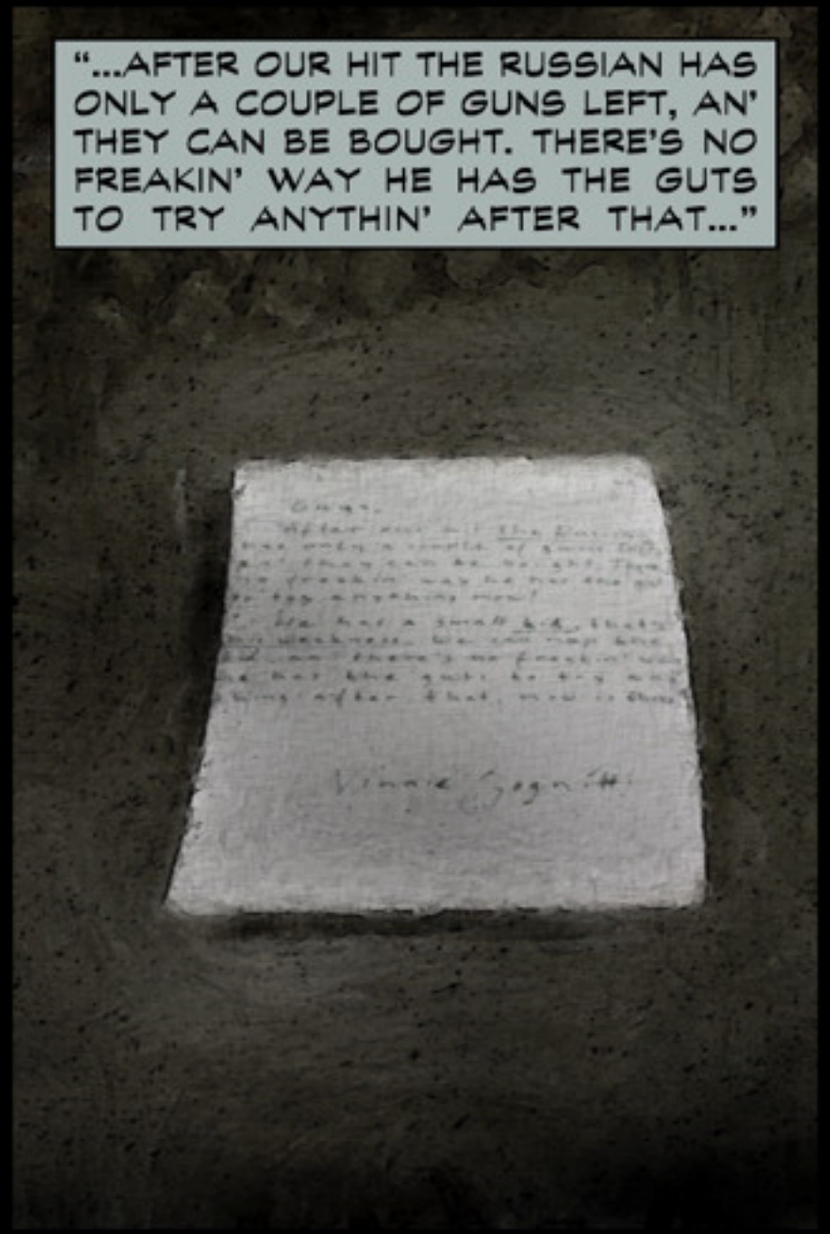
AM I SPEAKING TO MR. PAYNE?
WHO WANTS TO KNOW?
MY NAME IS ALFRED WODEN. YOU MUST HURRY. THE POLICE ARE ON THEIR WAY.
TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW.

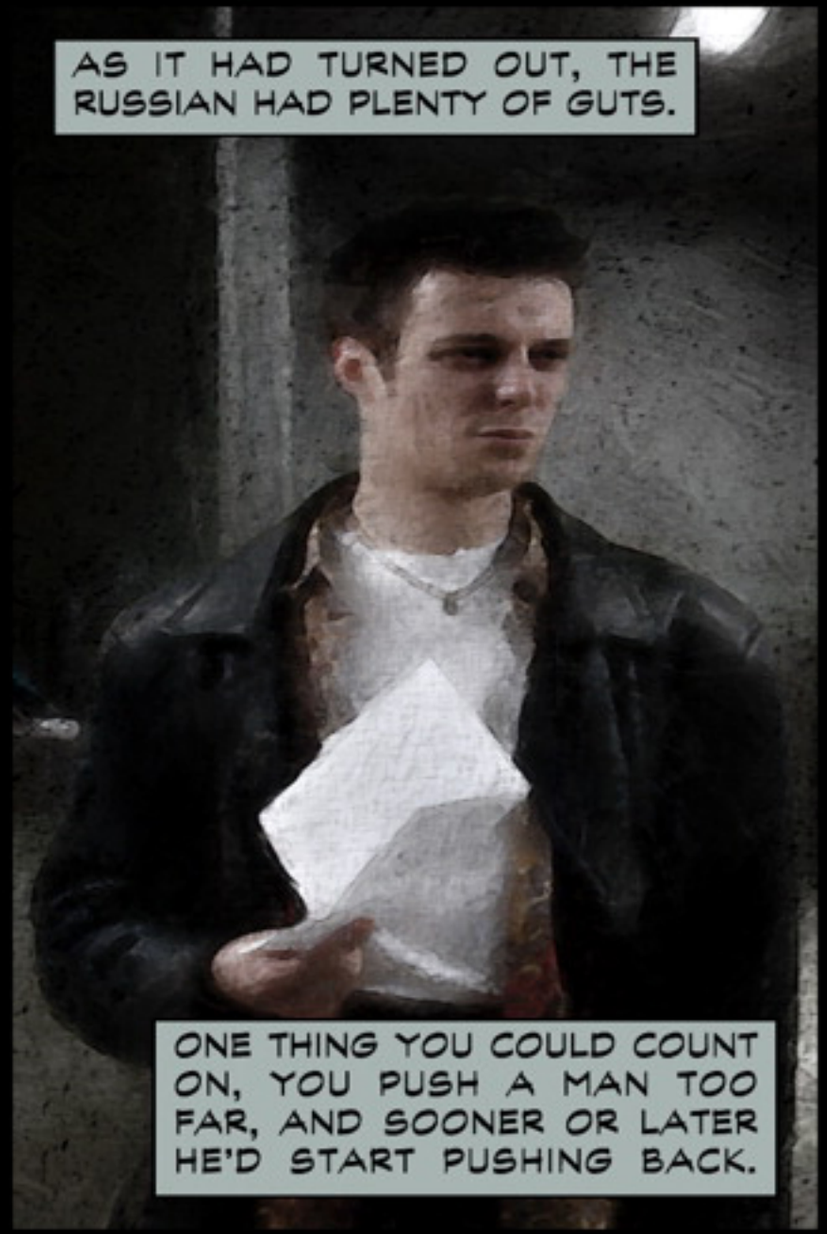
THEY KNOW YOU'RE THERE.
HOW? AND WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
I WILL CONTACT YOU AGAIN.
KLIK!


THE COPS ARRIVED, SIRENS SINGING IN THE OFF-KEY HARMONY OF A MANIC-DEPRESSIVE CHOIR.
I HAD A FEW MINUTES WHILE THE SWAT TEAM WOULD GO THROUGH THEIR USUAL ROUTINE, BY THE TIME THEY BUSTED IN, I NEEDED TO BE LONG GONE.

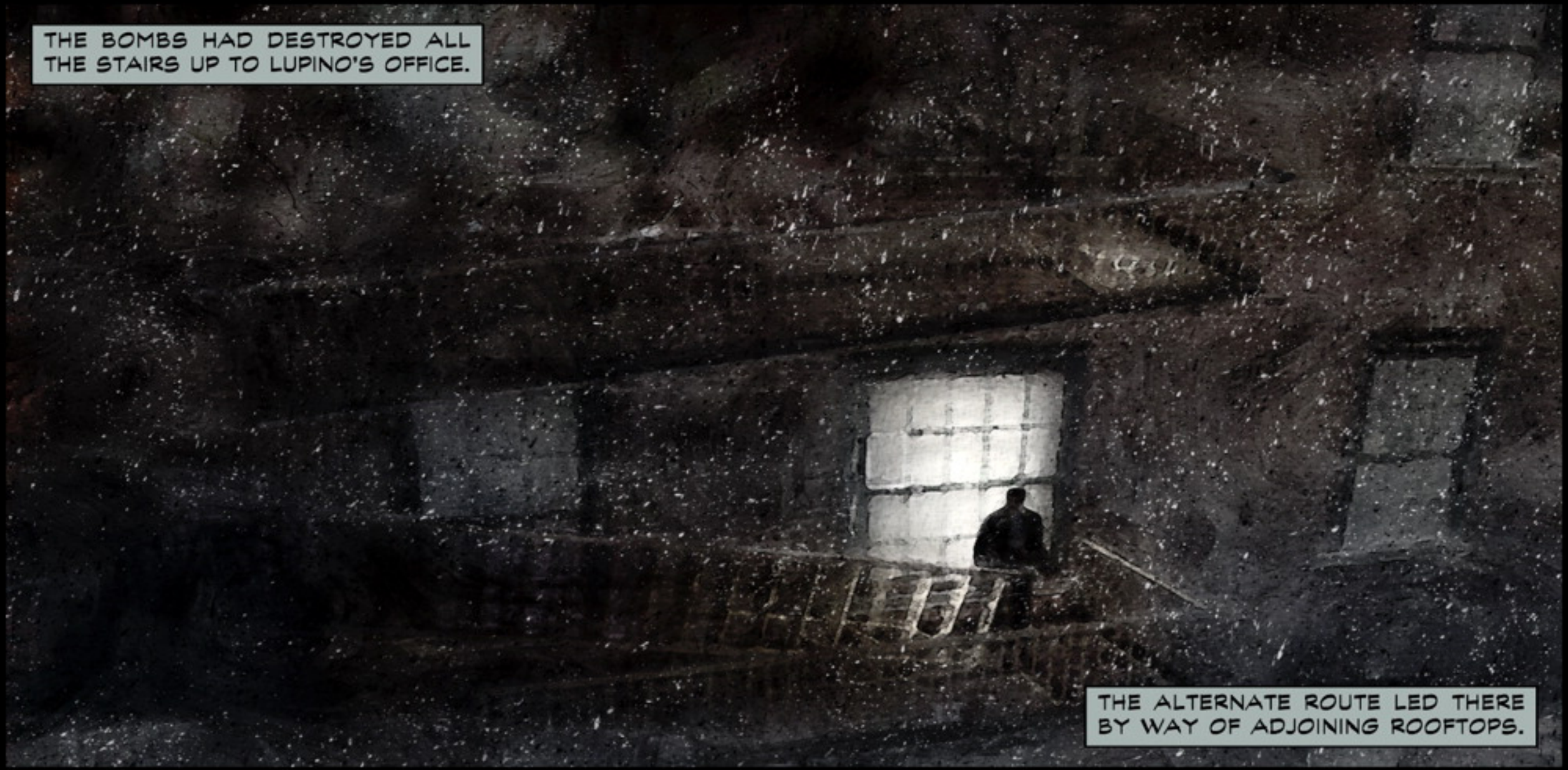
MAX PAYNE, THIS IS DEPUTY CHIEF JIM BRAVURA FROM THE NYPD. DROP YOUR WEAPONS AND COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS ABOVE YOUR HEAD.

SUDDENLY IT ALL MADE SENSE, THE BOMBS, THE RUSSIAN MOB BOSS MAKING AN APPEARANCE IN PERSON.
GOGNITTI WAS HIS USUAL SELF, ALL TALK AND NO WALK.


"...AFTER OUR HIT THE RUSSIAN HAS ONLY A COUPLE OF GUNS LEFT, AN' THEY CAN BE BOUGHT. THERE'S NO FREAKIN' WAY HE HAS THE GUTS TO TRY ANYTHIN' AFTER THAT..."

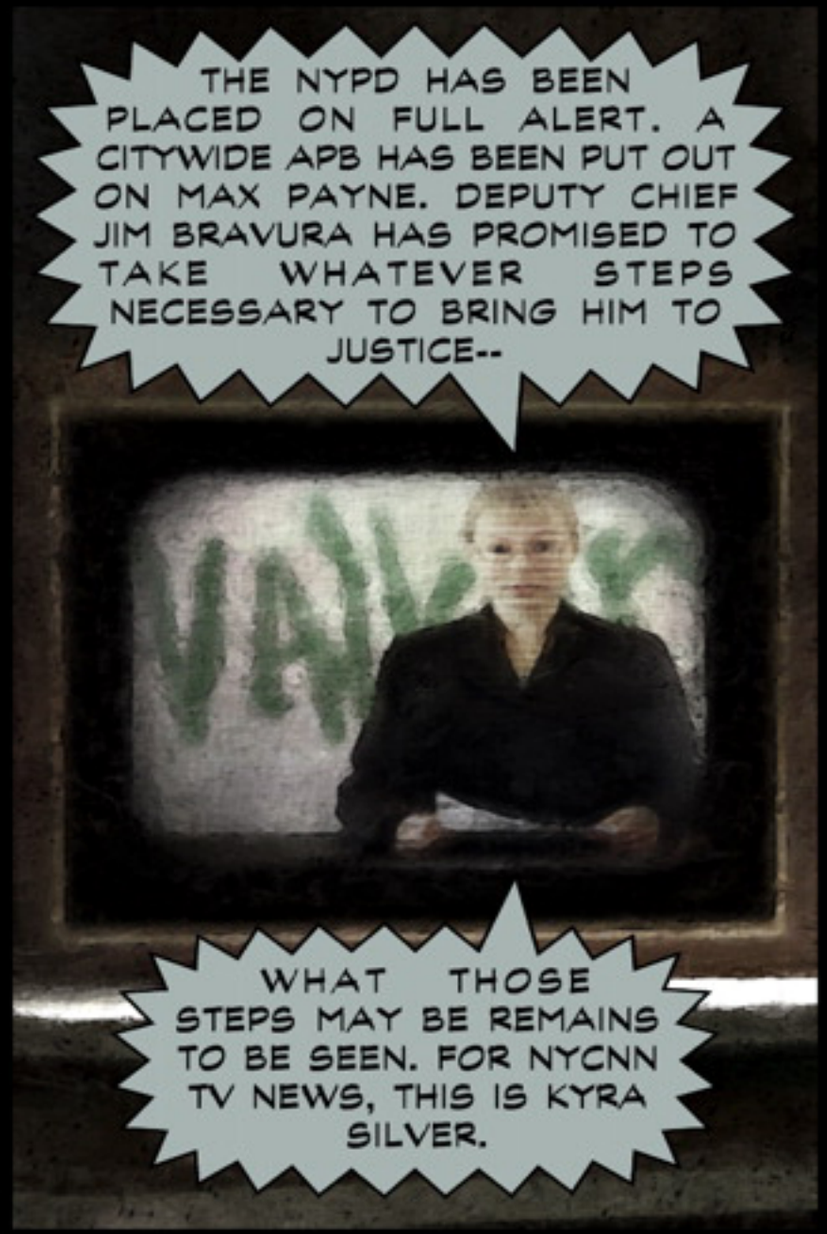

AS IT HAD TURNED OUT, THE RUSSIAN HAD PLENTY OF GUTS.
ONE THING YOU COULD COUNT ON, YOU PUSH A MAN TOO FAR, AND SOONER OR LATER HE'D START PUSHING BACK.

MAX PAYNE™
PART I: THE AMERICAN DREAM
CASHED
SATURDAY NIGHT
AT THE MOVIES
CHAPTER SIX: FEAR THAT GIVES MEN WINGS


THE BOMBS HAD DESTROYED ALL THE STAIRS UP TO LUPINO'S OFFICE.
THE ALTERNATE ROUTE LED THERE BY WAY OF ADJOINING ROOFTOPS.

NEW YORK CITY IS IN CRISIS TONIGHT, WITH REPORTS OF VALKYR-RELATED GANG WAR IN THE STREETS OF THE BRONX. APPARENTLY MAX PAYNE -- WANTED FOR QUESTIONING IN CONNECTION WITH THE SLAYING OF A DEA SPECIAL AGENT EARLIER TONIGHT -- IS WAGING A ONE-MAN WAR AGAINST HIS FORMER PARTNERS IN CRIME.

AMONG THE LISTED CASUALTIES SO FAR ARE NOTORIOUS MAFIA MEMBERS JOEY AND VIRGILIO FINITO, AS WELL AS RICO MUERTE, HIMSELF A FUGITIVE FROM THE LAW AND A SUSPECT FOR SEVERAL MURDERS IN THE CHICAGO AREA.
HOTEL


THE NYPD HAS BEEN PLACED ON FULL ALERT. A CITYWIDE APB HAS BEEN PUT OUT ON MAX PAYNE. DEPUTY CHIEF JIM BRAVURA HAS PROMISED TO TAKE WHATEVER STEPS NECESSARY TO BRING HIM TO JUSTICE--
WHAT THOSE STEPS MAY BE REMAINS TO BE SEEN. FOR NYCNN TV NEWS, THIS IS KYRA SILVER.

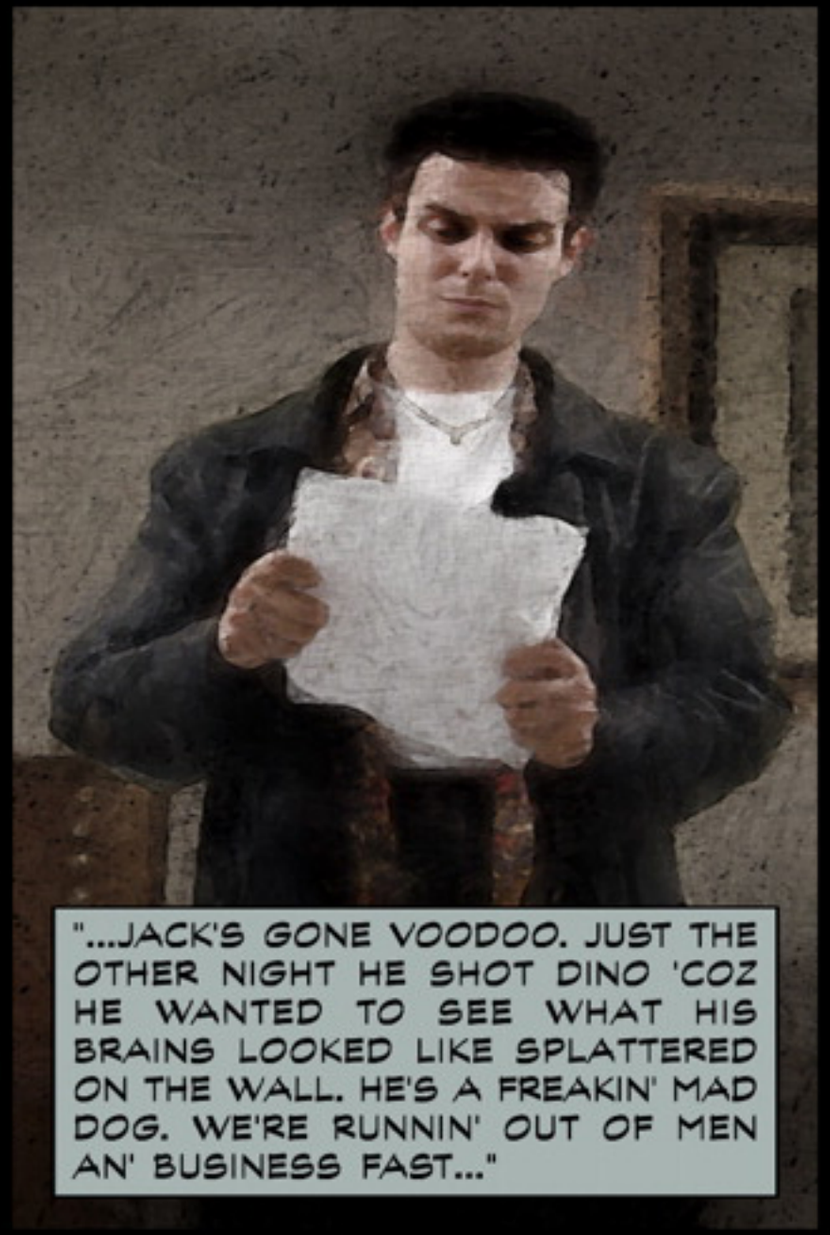
KRAKK!

VINNIE GOGNITTI, JUST THE MAN I'VE BEEN KILLING TO SEE.
PAYNE!
FREAKIN' FED! I KNEW FROM DAY ONE THERE WAS SOMETHING SCREWY 'BOUT YA.

WADDYA THINK YER DOIN'? YER A FREAKIN' COP, YA AIN'T GOT SQUAT ON US. YA CAN'T JUST COME IN HERE WAVIN' YER PIECE LIKE IT MEANT SOMETHIN' --
BLAM!

YYEEAARGH!
OH MY GOD, OH GOD, YA SHOT ME, AAAHHH...
BLAM!
YER DEAD, PAYNE!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YA WAITIN' FOR, YA APES? KILL 'IM! KILL 'IM!
WITH PLEASURE, BOSS.
KLIK!
KLAK!
KLAK!
GOGNITTI BAILED. I MADE LIKE CHOW YUN FAT.

THE LETTER WAS ADDRESSED TO DON PUNCHINELLO, BUT VINNIE HAD NEVER HAD THE NERVE TO FINISH IT.

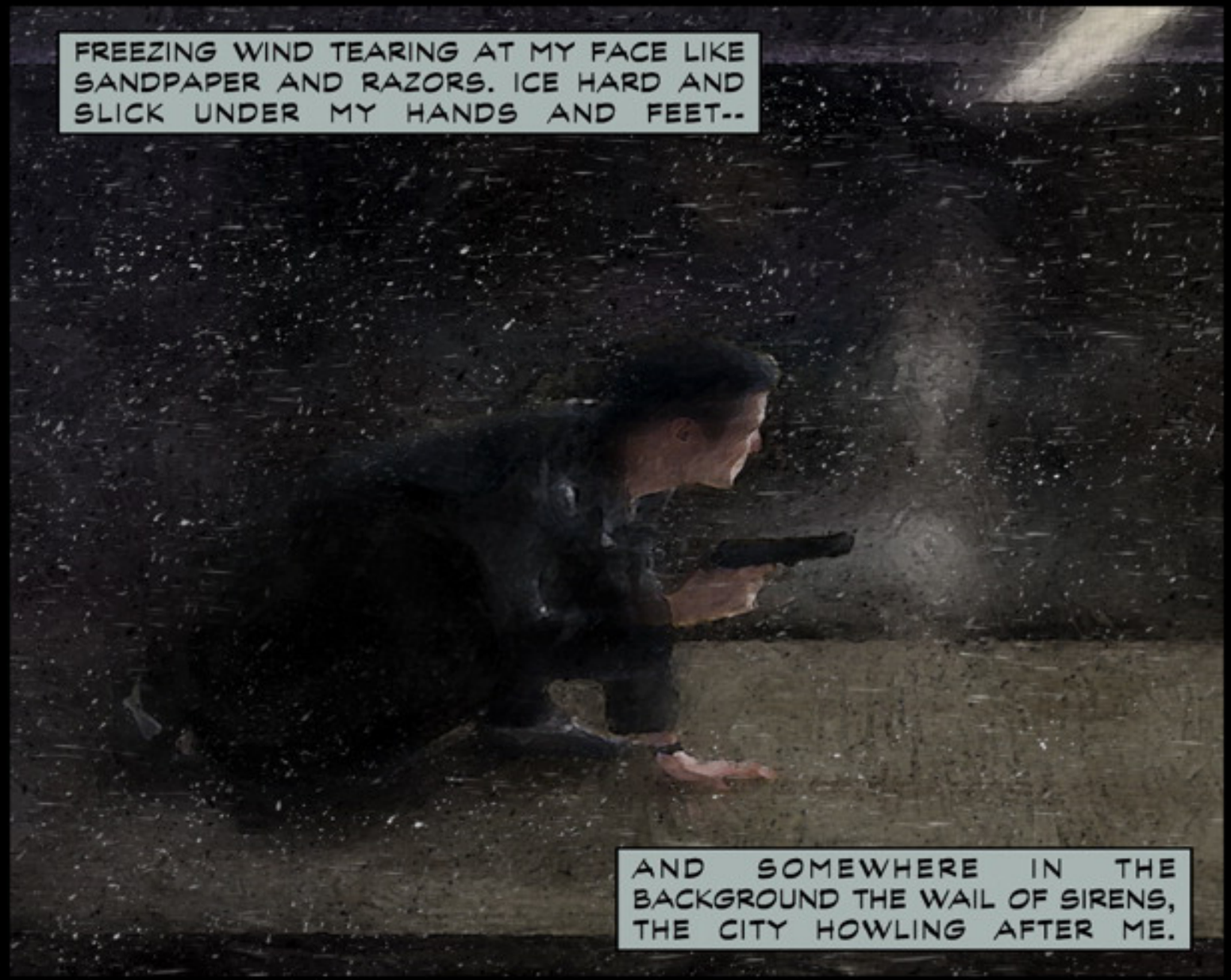

"...JACK'S GONE VOODOO. JUST THE OTHER NIGHT HE SHOT DINO 'COZ HE WANTED TO SEE WHAT HIS BRAINS LOOKED LIKE SPLATTERED ON THE WALL. HE'S A FREAKIN' MAD DOG. WE'RE RUNNIN' OUT OF MEN AN' BUSINESS FAST..."

GOGNITTI HAD BEEN LIVING IN MORTAL FEAR OF HIS BOSS.
JACK LUPINO WAS A PSYCHO.

VINNIE GOGNITTI WAS RUNNING SCARED.
HE COULD RUN, BUT WITH A BULLET IN HIS STOMACH LIKE A BROKEN BOTTLE OF TABASCO, HE WAS QUICKLY RUNNING OUT OF TIME.
HE KNEW WHERE HIS BOSS WAS, AND I WANTED TO SQUARE THINGS UP WITH JACK LUPINO.
GOGNITTI WOULD BE MOVING FAST. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT ANGELS, BUT IT'S FEAR THAT GIVES MEN WINGS.

MAX PAYNE™
PART I: THE AMERICAN DREAM
CHAPTER SEVEN: POLICE BRUTALITY

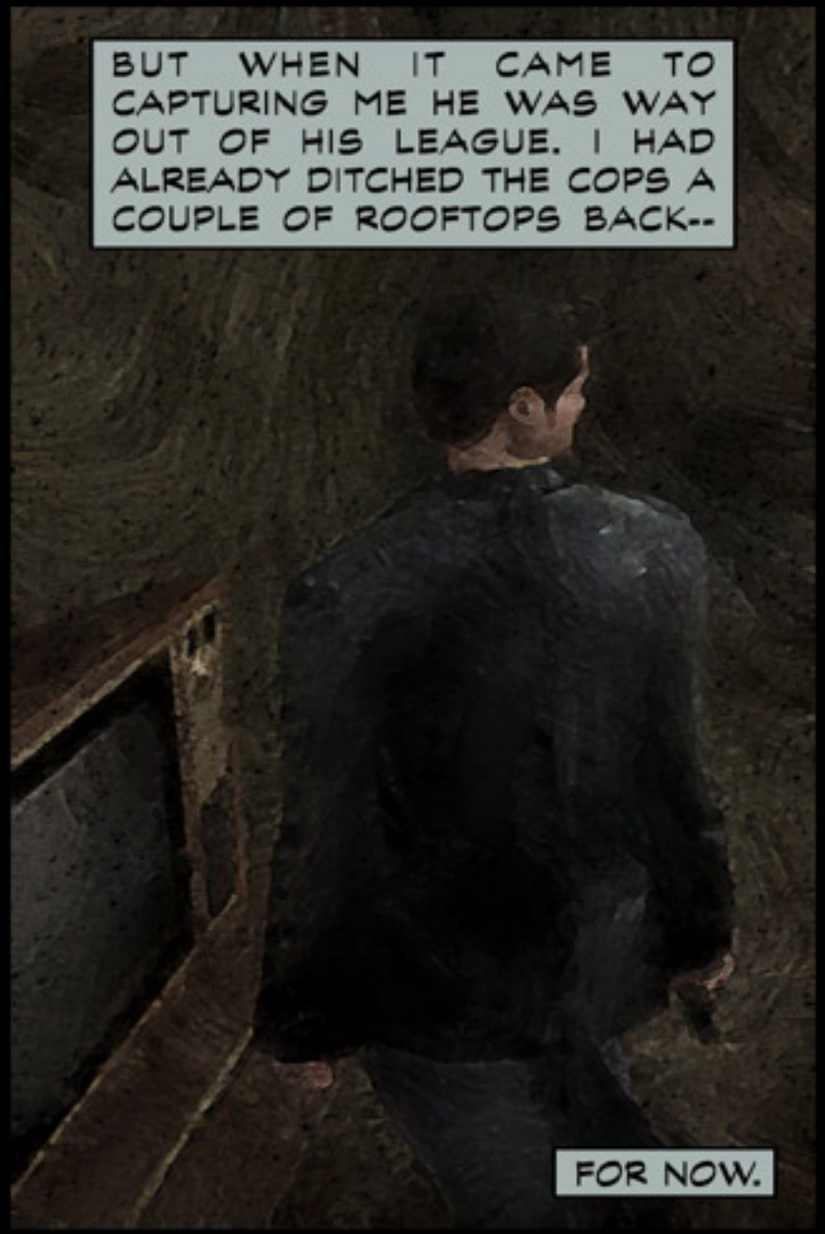
THIS WAS MY SECOND TRAIN RIDE OF THE NIGHT. THE WAY IT STARTED DIDN'T PROMISE ANYTHING BETTER THAN THE LAST ONE.


FREEZING WIND TEARING AT MY FACE LIKE SANDPAPER AND RAZORS. ICE HARD AND SLICK UNDER MY HANDS AND FEET--
AND SOMEWHERE IN THE BACKGROUND THE WAIL OF SIRENS, THE CITY HOWLING AFTER ME.

NEW YORK SPED BY ON FAST FORWARD, DARK ROOFTOP WATER TOWERS AND A DEAD FOREST OF ANTENNAS AND CHIMNEYS, ALL A BLUR.
WHEN THE TRAIN HE WAS RIDING SLOWED DOWN, GOGNITTI MADE HIS MOVE.

...MAX PAYNE HAS NOWHERE LEFT TO GO. WE ARE VERY CLOSE TO CAPTURING HIM. YOU'LL GET A FULL STATEMENT THEN, RIGHT NOW I'VE GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO, MA'AM.

THAT WAS DEPUTY CHIEF JIM BRAVURA FROM THE NYPD WITH NO FURTHER COMMENT AT THIS TIME...
APART FROM HIS SUSPICIOUS FOOD HABITS I FIGURED BRAVURA TO BE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS. FATE HAD JUST DROPPED US ON DIFFERENT SIDES IN THIS.


BUT WHEN IT CAME TO CAPTURING ME HE WAS WAY OUT OF HIS LEAGUE. I HAD ALREADY DITCHED THE COPS A COUPLE OF ROOFTOPS BACK--
FOR NOW.

GOGNITTI RAN OUT OF STEAM IN A DEAD END ALLEY WITH STEAM BOILING OUT OF THE SEWER GRATES LIKE ALL THE FIRES OF HELL WERE BURNING HIGH BENEATH US.

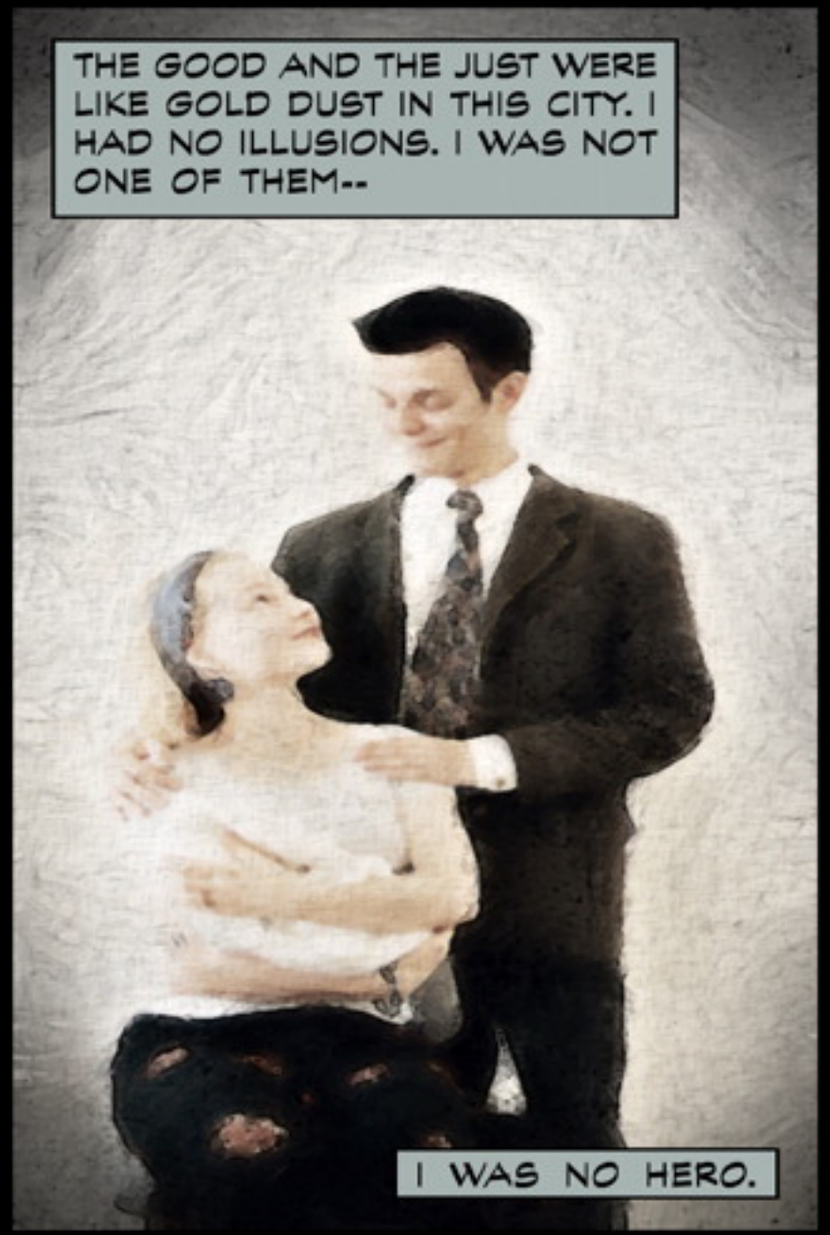
IT WAS SHAKEDOWN TIME.

WHERE'S LUPINO?
SCREW YA!
BAD START, VINNIE.

AARGH! ...POLICE BRUTALITY --
I RATE PRETTY HIGH ON THAT.
YA...YA CAN'T JUST HURT ME IN COLD BLOOD.
Uh-uh. JUST KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT.

LISTEN GOOD, CANDY MAN.
I'M NOT GOING TO BE ANYBODY'S FALL GUY.
I WANT TO KNOW WHERE YOUR BOSS IS HIDING.

THERE WAS NO GLORY IN THIS.
I HADN'T ASKED FOR THIS CRAP. TROUBLE HAD COME TO ME, IN BIG DARK SWARMS.


THE GOOD AND THE JUST WERE LIKE GOLD DUST IN THIS CITY. I HAD NO ILLUSIONS. I WAS NOT ONE OF THEM--
I WAS NO HERO.

JUST ME AND THE GUN, AND THE CROOK.
MY OPTIONS HAD DECREASED TO A SINGULAR COURSE.

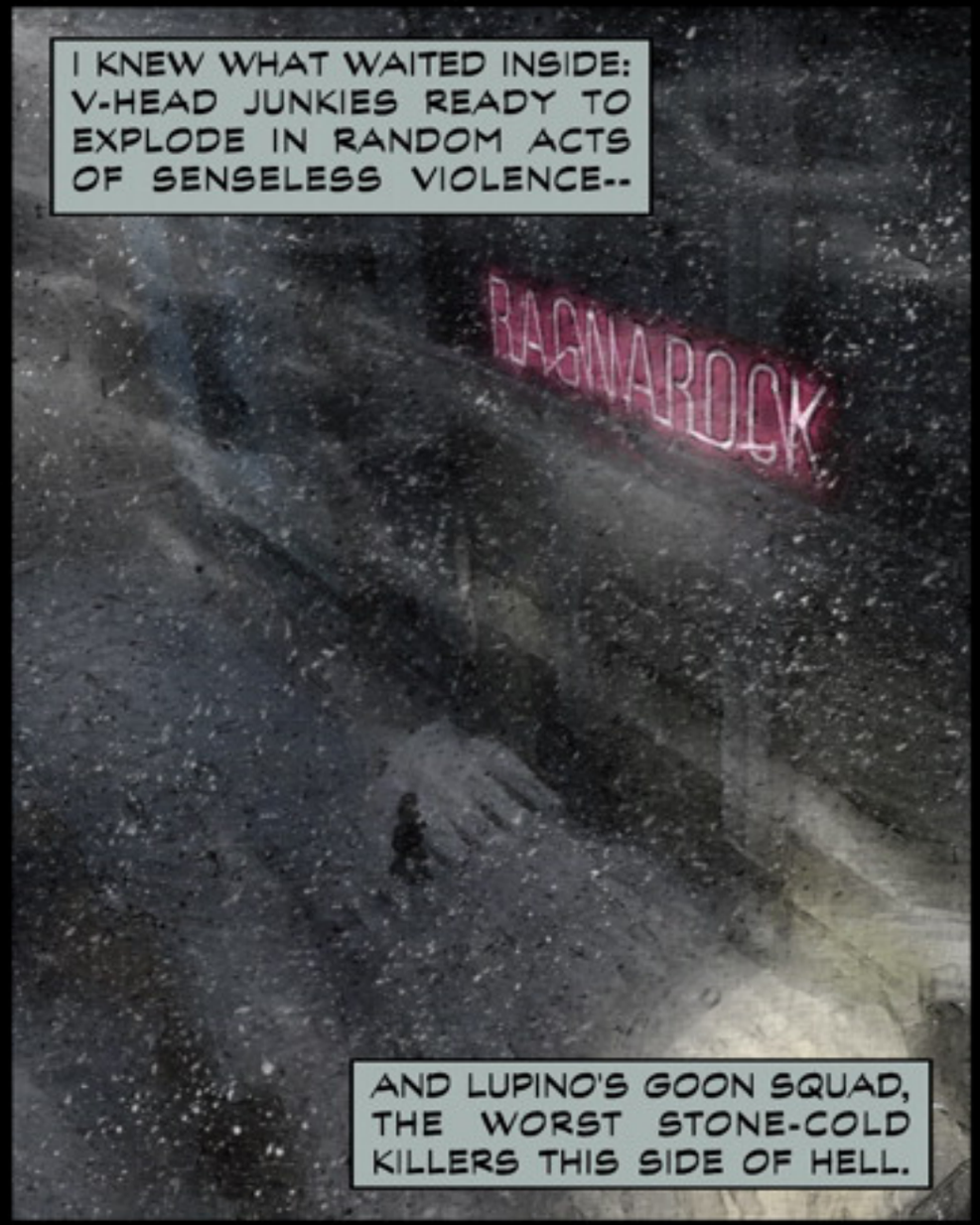
KLIK!

I'LL TELL YA! I'LL TELL YA, JUST DON'T HURT ME NO MORE!
LUPINO'S AT RAGNA ROCK! THE NIGHTCLUB!
BOOK ME, TAKE ME IN, HAUL ME TO THE FREAKIN' JAIL. JUST DON'T HURT ME...

YOUR RIGHTS WILL BE READ AT YOUR FUNERAL.

MAX PAYNE™
PART I: THE AMERICAN DREAM
CHAPTER EIGHT: RAGNA ROCK

RAGNA ROCK WAS LUPINO'S PRIVATE NIGHTCLUB. A DEN OF DRUGS BUILT INTO AN OLD THEATER.
RAGNAROCK

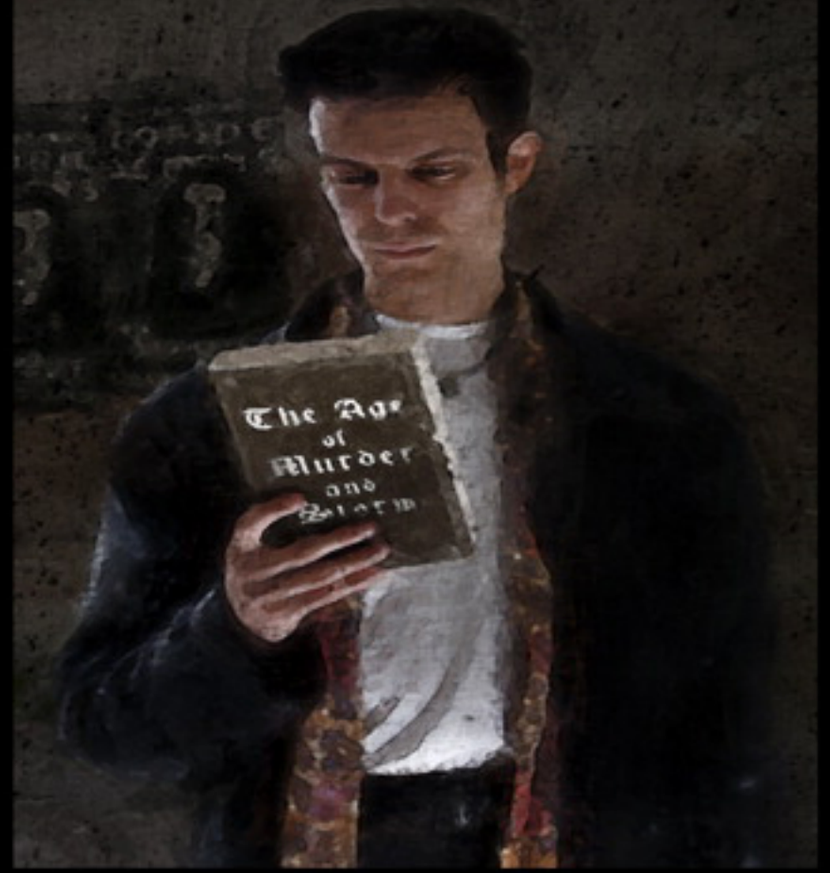

I KNEW WHAT WAITED INSIDE: V-HEAD JUNKIES READY TO EXPLODE IN RANDOM ACTS OF SENSELESS VIOLENCE--
RAGNAROCK
AND LUPINO'S GOON SQUAD, THE WORST STONE-COLD KILLERS THIS SIDE OF HELL.

RAGNA ROCK WAS AS INVITING AS A HEADACHE, FLICKERING AND FLASHING TO A MACHINE GUN BEAT.
THE BELLY OF THE NIGHTCLUB WAS A GOTHIC THEME PARK THAT BEGAN WITH BONDAGE GAMES, AND LED TO THE NASTY STUFF FROM THERE--
GWARDCK
AS SUBTLE WITH ITS DARK MESSAGE AS A COP KILLER BULLET THROUGH THE HEART.
LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON. JUST LIKE JACK LUPINO.

GIVEN THE SETTING, I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THAT SOMEBODY HAD BEEN PASSING TIME READING.

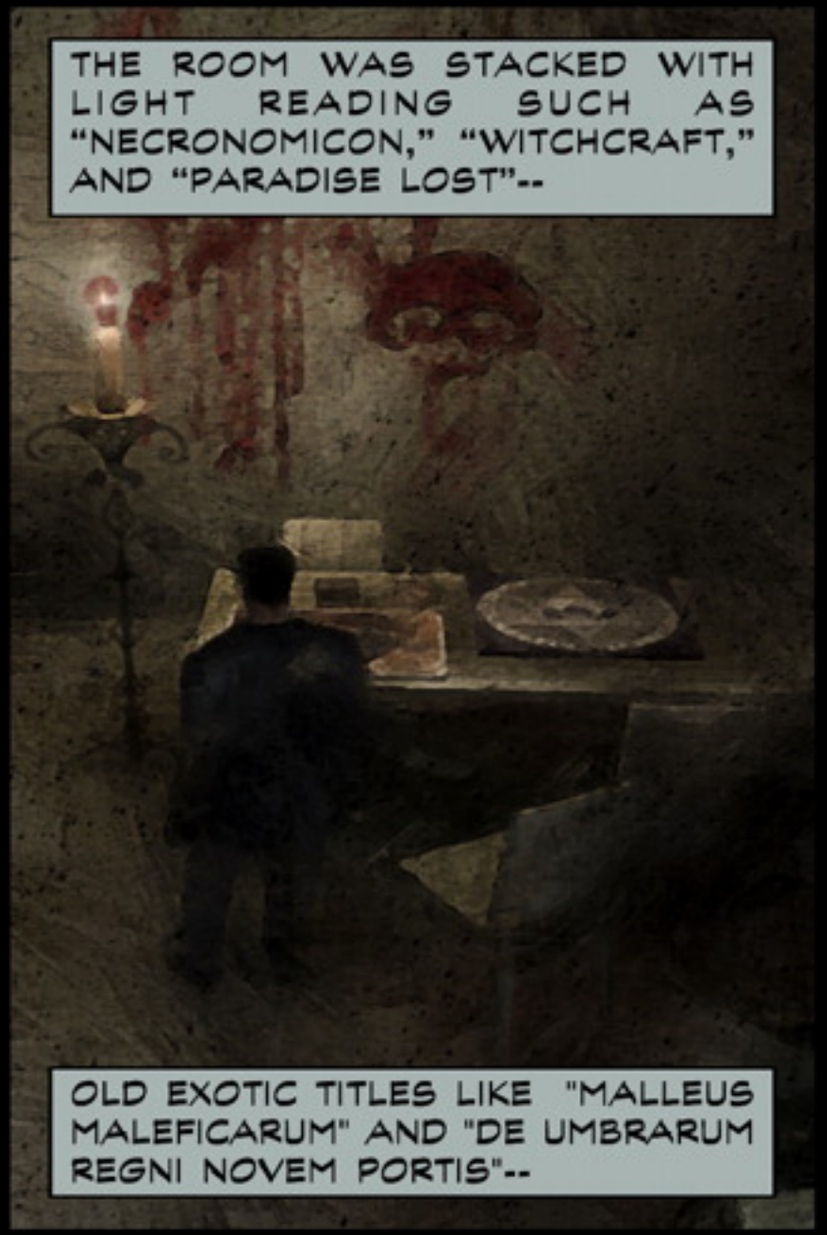
THE PAPERBACK WAS ENTITLED "THE AGE OF MURDER AND STORM."

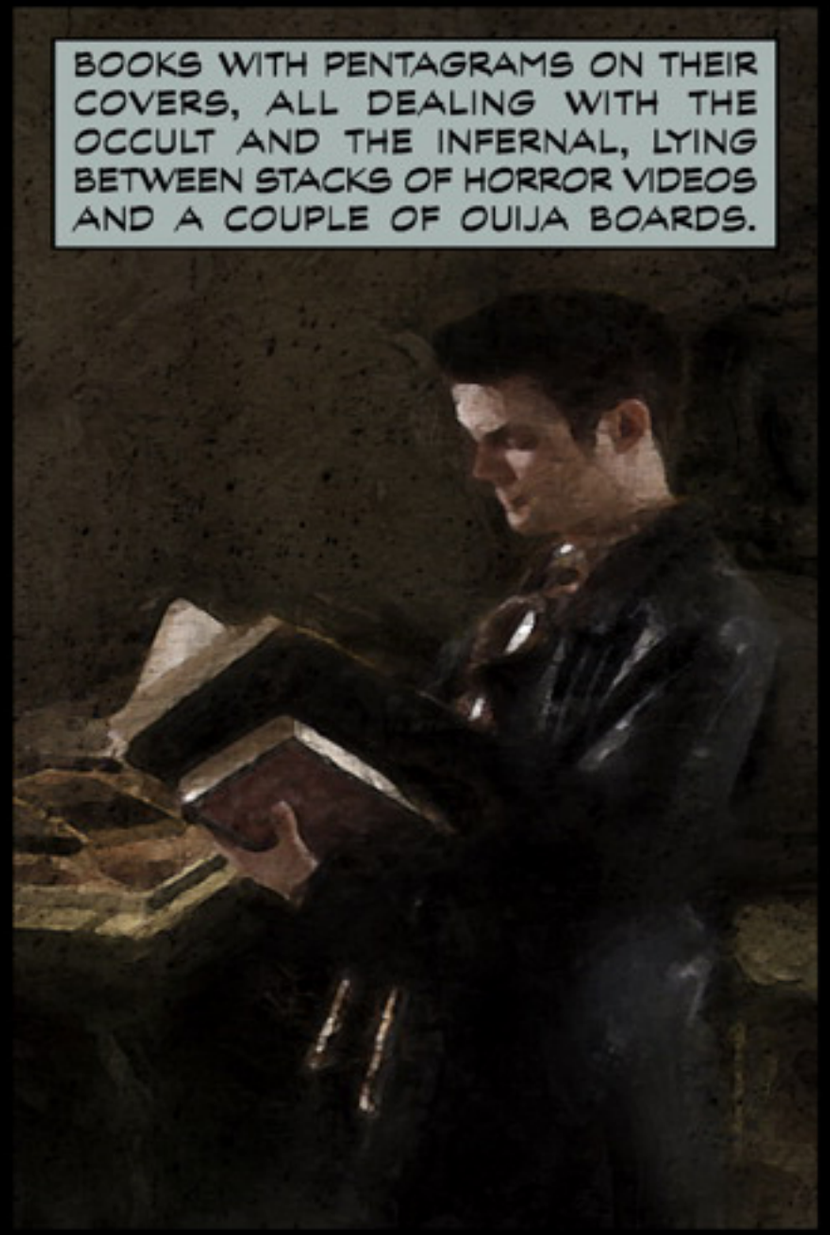
THE BLURB ON THE BACK MENTIONED NORSE MYTHOS AND RAGNAROK, THE END OF THE VIKING WORLD WITH A TERRIBLE WINTER THAT COVERED THE EARTH IN ICE. WHEN VILE CRIMES WERE RAMPANT AND ALL HUMANITY LOST.



I COULD SEE HOW SOMEBODY IMPRESSIONABLE MIGHT GET IT INTO THEIR HEAD THAT WE WERE AT THE END OF TIME.

I WAS ALSO BEGINNING TO SEE WHAT THE NIGHTCLUB AND ITS OWNER WERE ALL ABOUT.


THE ROOM WAS STACKED WITH LIGHT READING SUCH AS "NECRONOMICON," "WITCHCRAFT," AND "PARADISE LOST"--
OLD EXOTIC TITLES LIKE "MALLEUS MALEFICARUM" AND "DE UMBRARUM REGNI NOVEM PORTIS"--

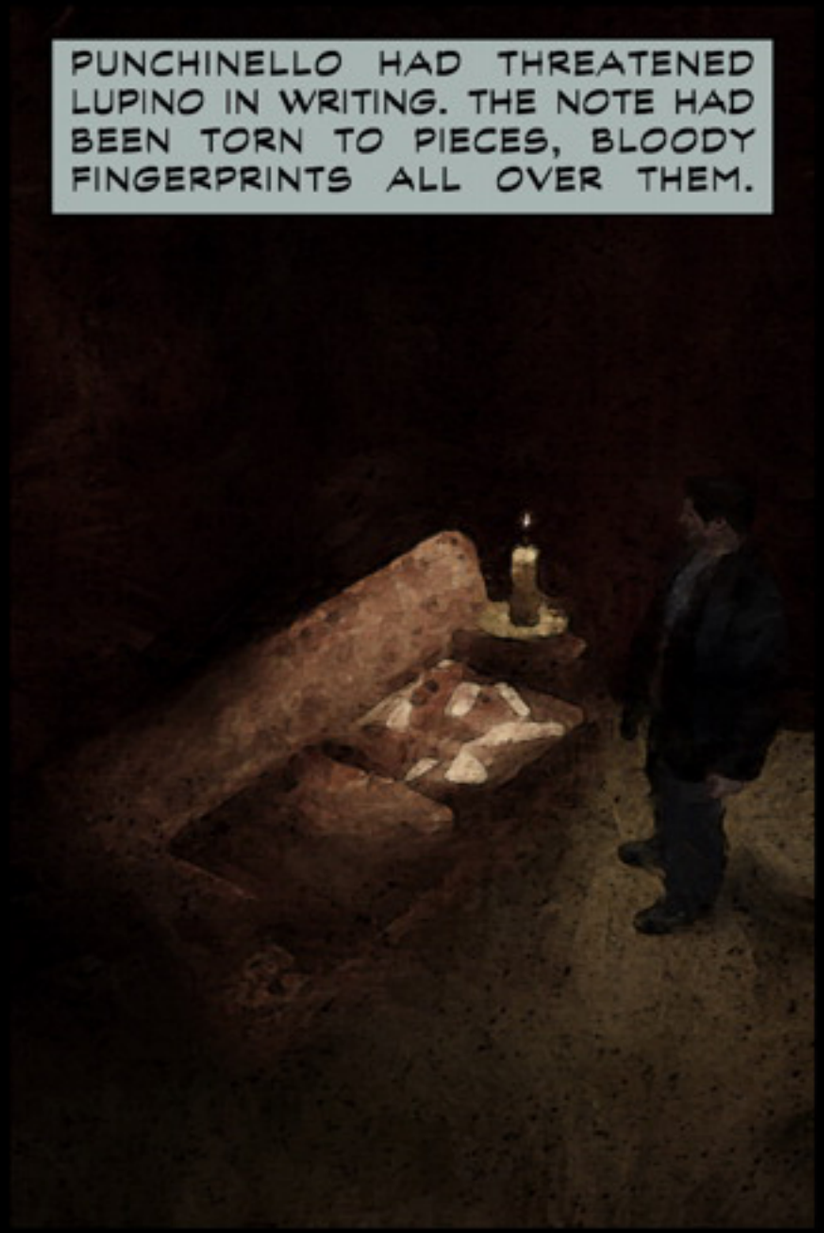

BOOKS WITH PENTAGRAMS ON THEIR COVERS, ALL DEALING WITH THE OCCULT AND THE INFERNAL, LYING BETWEEN STACKS OF HORROR VIDEOS AND A COUPLE OF OUIJA BOARDS.

THE ONLY THING I COULD TAKE SERIOUSLY WAS THE THOUGHT OF LUPINO TAKING IT SERIOUSLY.
HE HAD BEEN SPENDING A LOT OF TIME GETTING INTIMATE WITH THE GUY DOWNSTAIRS.

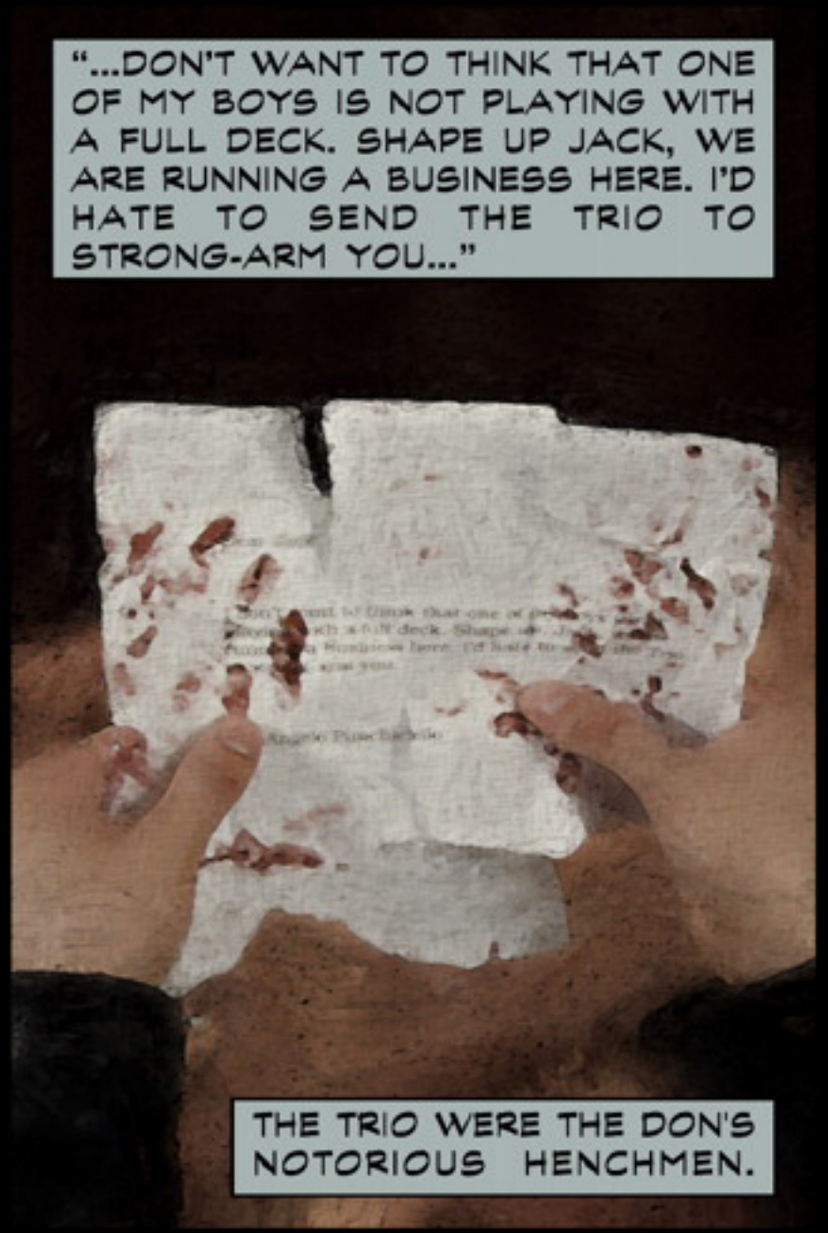
MAX PAYNE™
PART I: THE AMERICAN DREAM
CHAPTER NINE: AN EMPIRE OF EVIL

THE BACKSTAGE AREA LED TO LUPINO'S INNER SANCTUM.
THE HOT AIR INSIDE WAS LIKE AN INVISIBLE WALL, THICK WITH INCENSE AND SOMETHING ELSE, A SICKLY SWEET SMELL THAT MADE YOU GAG.
THIS WAS THE ROTTEN CORE OF THE BIG APPLE. LUPINO LURKED SOMEWHERE AHEAD, LIKE A SPIDER AT THE CENTER OF HIS WEB, WAITING.
THE VAPORS IN THE AIR STARTED TO MAKE MY HEAD SWIM.

PUNCHINELLO HAD THREATENED LUPINO IN WRITING. THE NOTE HAD BEEN TORN TO PIECES, BLOODY FINGERPRINTS ALL OVER THEM.

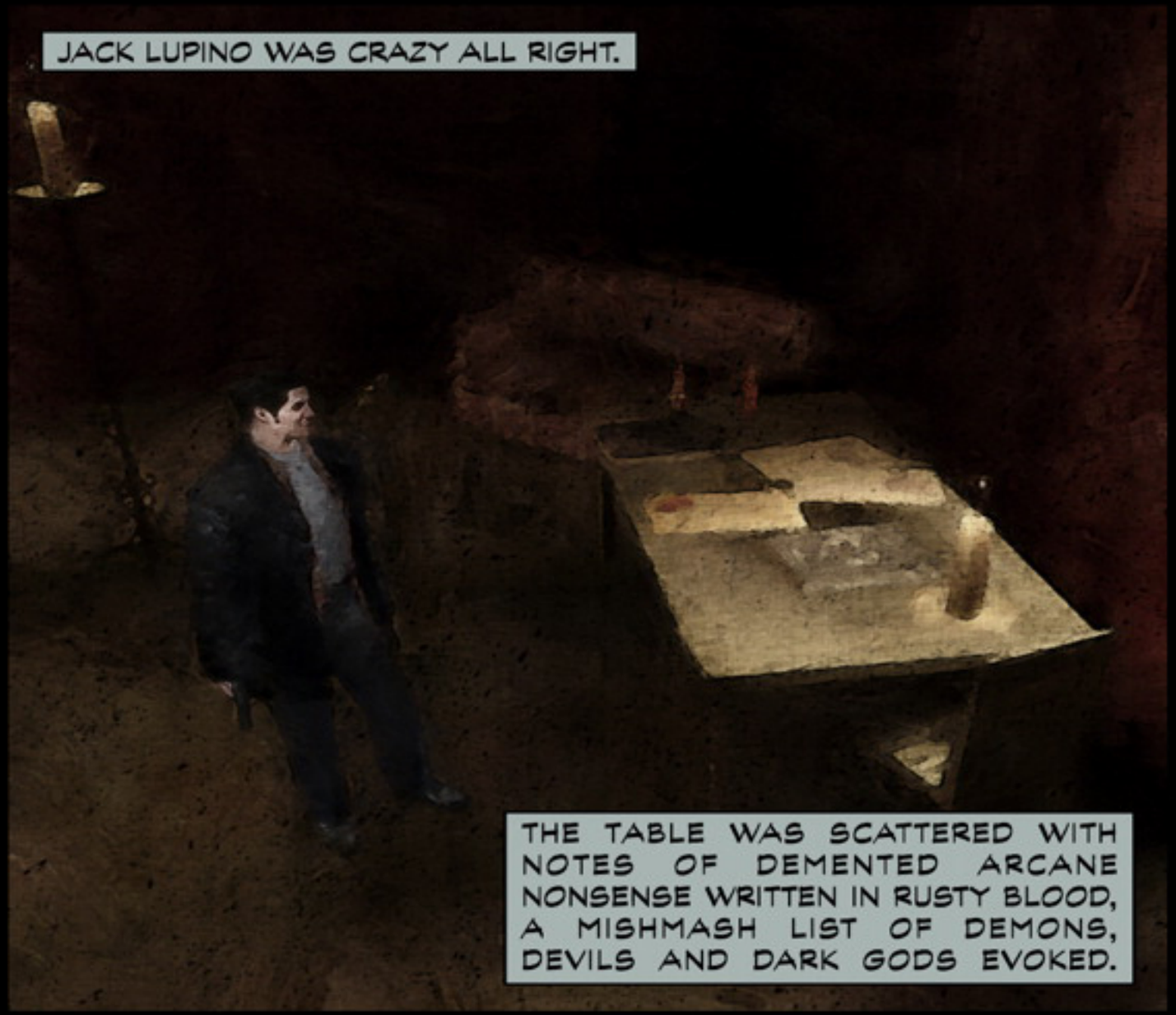


"...DON'T WANT TO THINK THAT ONE OF MY BOYS IS NOT PLAYING WITH A FULL DECK. SHAPE UP JACK, WE ARE RUNNING A BUSINESS HERE. I'D HATE TO SEND THE TRIO TO STRONG-ARM YOU..."



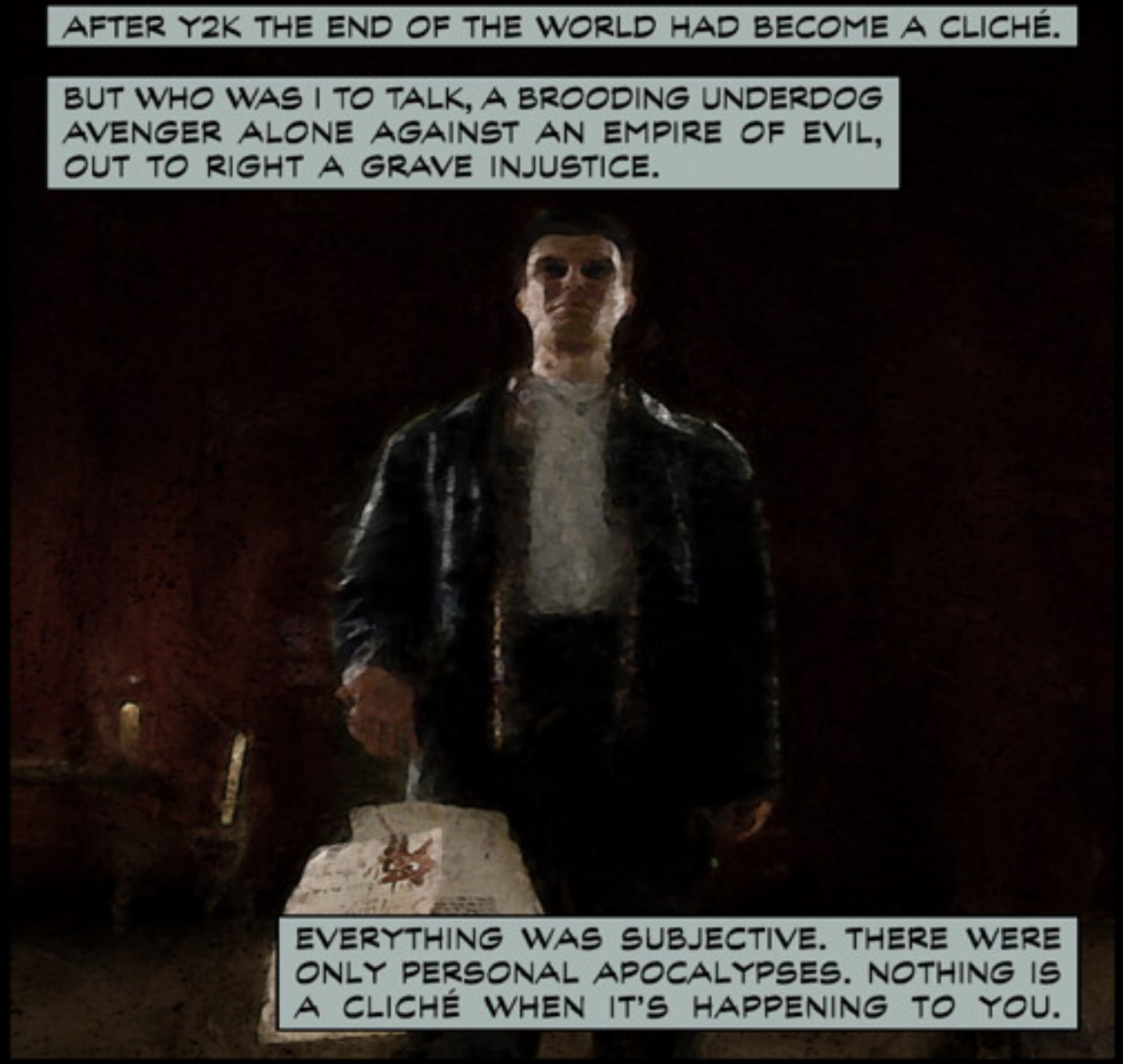
THE TRIO WERE THE DON'S NOTORIOUS HENCHMEN.

IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT LUPINO HADN'T BEEN INTIMIDATED BY THE THREAT.


JACK LUPINO WAS CRAZY ALL RIGHT.
THE TABLE WAS SCATTERED WITH NOTES OF DEMENTED ARCANE NONSENSE WRITTEN IN RUSTY BLOOD, A MISHMASH LIST OF DEMONS, DEVILS AND DARK GODS EVOKED.

"...BEELZEBUB, ASMODEUS, BAPHOMET, LUCIFER, LOKI, CTHULHU, LILITH, HELA... BLOOD GIVEN TO YOU ALL..."
HE WAS AFTER THAT OLD FAUSTIAN DEAL - YOUR SOUL FOR POWER AND FORTUNE, "JUST SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE WITH YOUR BLOOD."

JACK LUPINO WAS CRAZY ALL RIGHT.
"...MYTHIC WOLVES LET LOOSE TO DEVOUR THE SUN AND THE MOON. LUPINO IS THE WOLF. I'M MR. BEAST, THE BIG BAD FENRIS WOLF, I'M THE END-OF-THE-WORLD-MAN, WEARING THE FLESH OF FALLEN ANGELS."


AFTER Y2K THE END OF THE WORLD HAD BECOME A CLICHÉ.
BUT WHO WAS I TO TALK, A BROODING UNDERDOG AVENGER ALONE AGAINST AN EMPIRE OF EVIL, OUT TO RIGHT A GRAVE INJUSTICE.
EVERYTHING WAS SUBJECTIVE. THERE WERE ONLY PERSONAL APOCALYPSES. NOTHING IS A CLICHÉ WHEN IT'S HAPPENING TO YOU.

I HAD KNOWN THERE'D HAVE TO BE A CATCH IN IT SOMEWHERE, AND THIS ONE WAS THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING OF CATCHES.
LUPINO WAS PUMPED UP AND DYING TO GO 15 ROUNDS WITH A MUTANT ALLIGATOR.
AND THEN HE STARTED THIS SPOOKY MONKEY TALK. STRAIGHT FROM A BAD DREAM... MINE.
I HAVE TASTED THE FLESH OF FALLEN ANGELS...

I'VE TASTED THE DEVIL'S GREEN BLOOD. IT RUNS IN MY VEINS. I HAVE SEEN BEYOND THE WORLD OF SKIN, THE ARCHITECTURE OF BLOOD AND BONE MARROW...
DEATH IS COMING...

SHE IS COMING, AND HELL FOLLOWS WITH HER! THIS IS THE TWILIGHT WINTER...
I AM READY TO BE HER SON!
HER TIME IS NOW, AND ALL WHO STAND IN HER WAY--

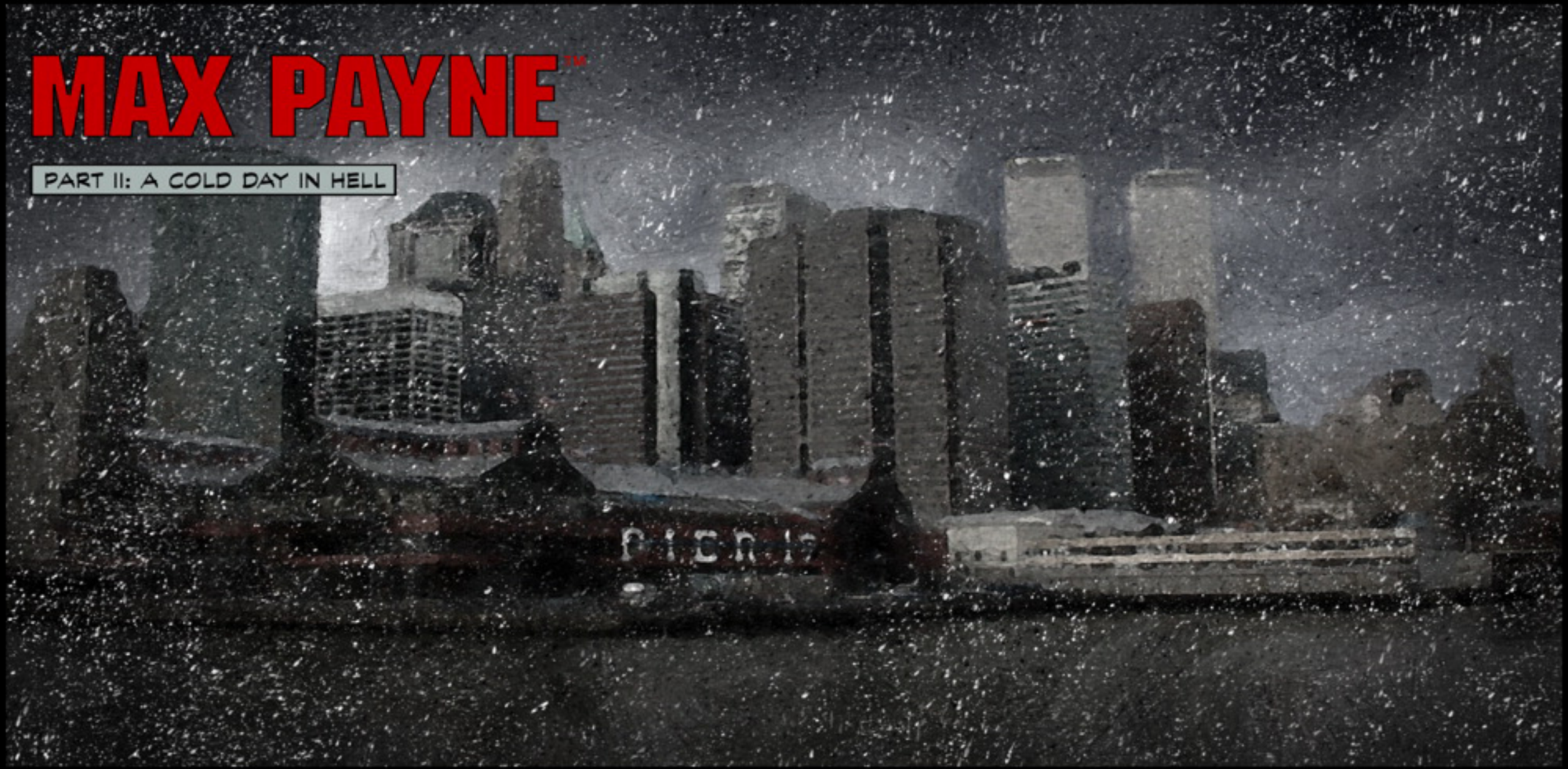
MUST DIE!

WHEN LUPINO FINALLY WENT DOWN, I WANTED TO MAKE REAL SURE HE'D STAY THAT WAY. V WAS A BAD MONSTER, TURNED THEM INTO FREAKING ZOMBIE DEMONS FROM OUTER SPACE.

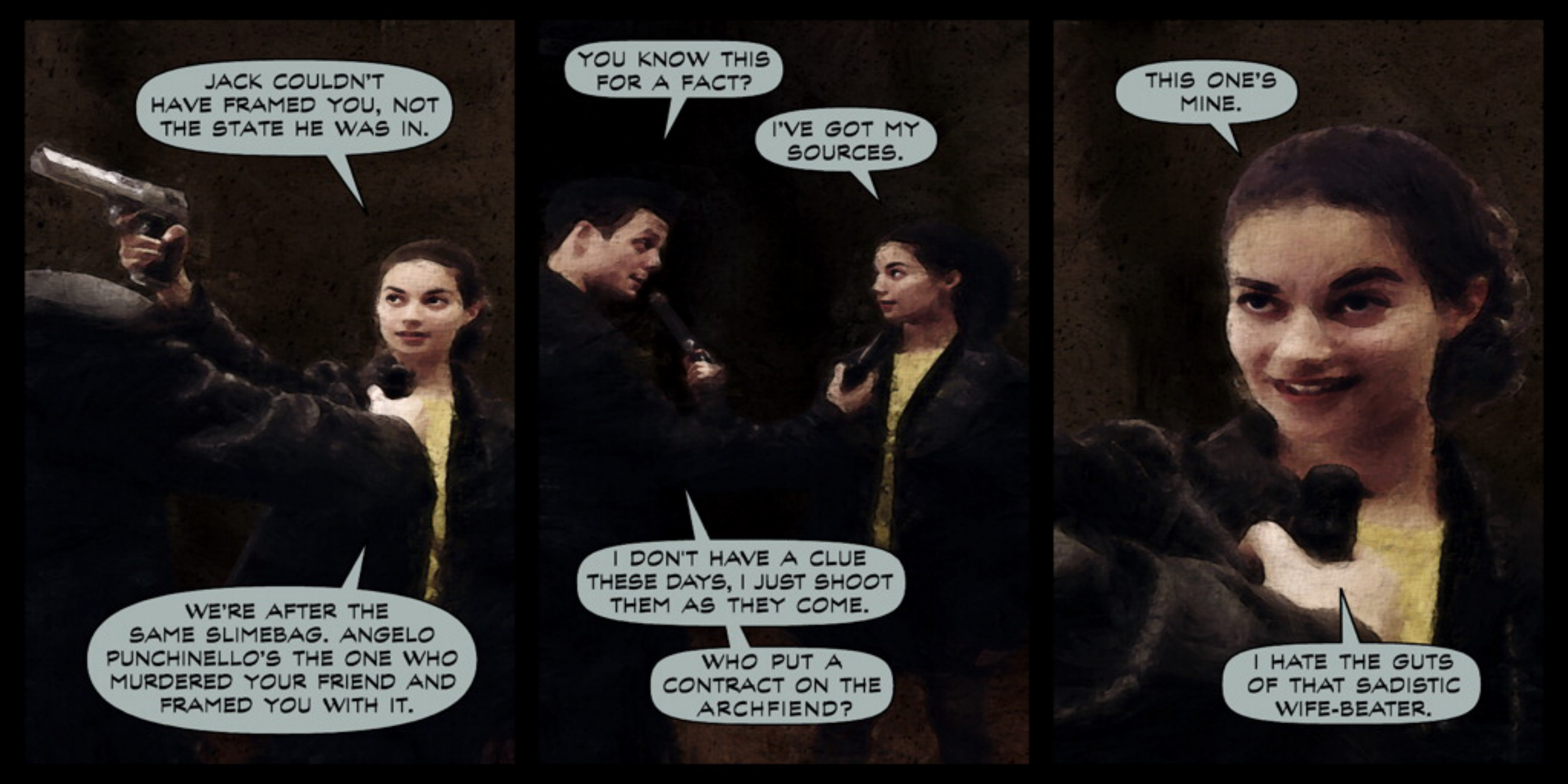
AND THAT'S WHEN IT HAPPENED--

IN STEPPED THIS KNOCKOUT FEMME FATALE, HOLDING A GUN TO MY FACE.

I RETURNED THE FAVOR.

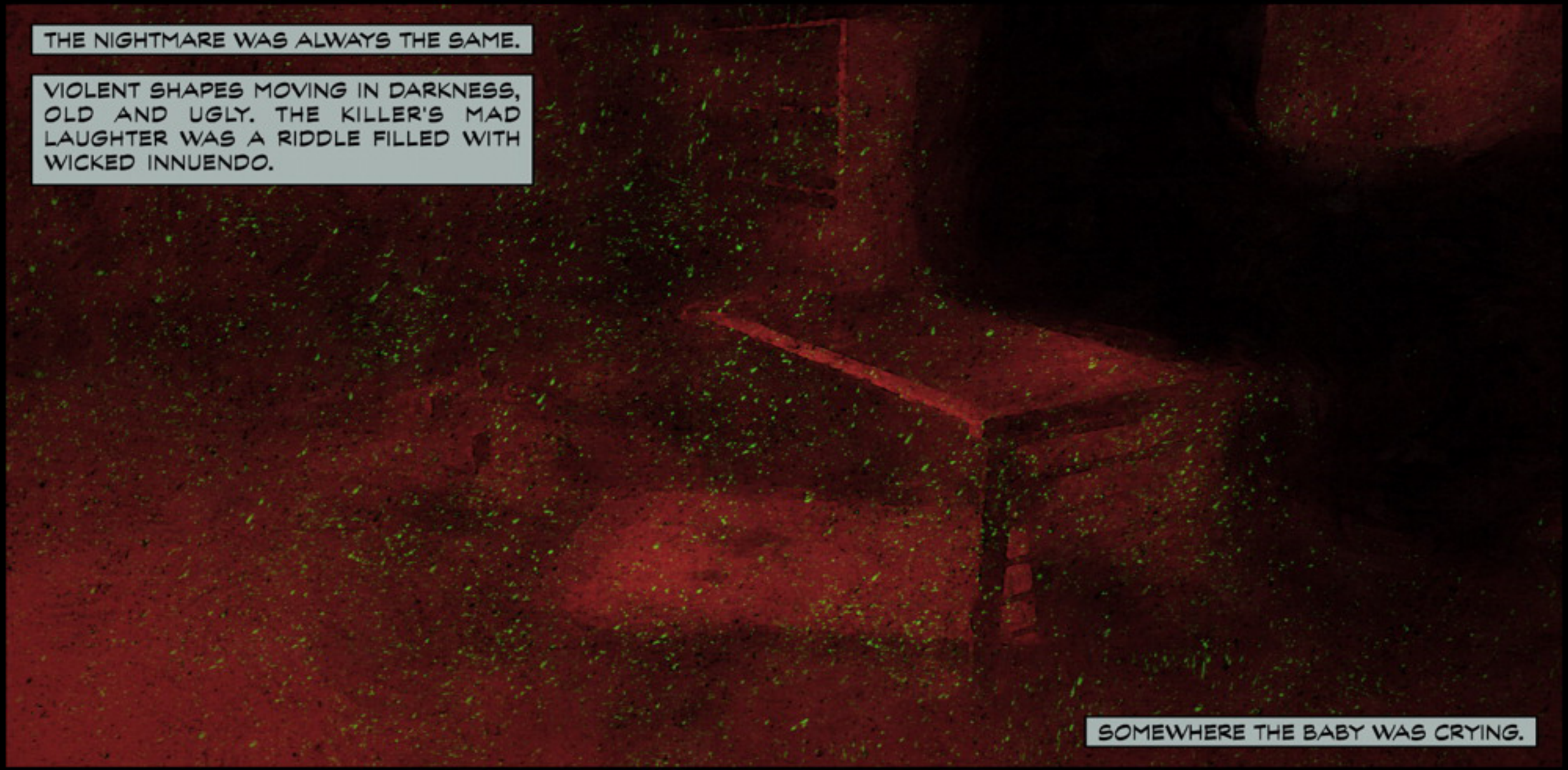

MAX PAYNE™
PART II: A COLD DAY IN HELL

LISA PUNCHINELLO...?
MONA SAX, LISA'S EVIL TWIN.
YOUR SAFETY'S OFF, EVIL TWIN. YOU MIGHT HURT SOMEONE WITH THAT GUN OF YOURS.
LISA'S THE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS, I'M THE PROFESSIONAL. I'D BLOW YOU AWAY WITHOUT BATTING AN EYE.
SURE, AND YOU CAN CHECK OUT MY CREDENTIALS SPLATTERED ALL OVER THIS JOINT.
LISA PUNCHINELLO WAS THE DON'S WIFE.


JACK COULDN'T HAVE FRAMED YOU, NOT THE STATE HE WAS IN.
WE'RE AFTER THE SAME SLIMEBAG. ANGELO PUNCHINELLO'S THE ONE WHO MURDERED YOUR FRIEND AND FRAMED YOU WITH IT.
YOU KNOW THIS FOR A FACT?
I'VE GOT MY SOURCES.
I DON'T HAVE A CLUE THESE DAYS, I JUST SHOOT THEM AS THEY COME.
WHO PUT A CONTRACT ON THE ARCHFIEND?
THIS ONE'S MINE.
I HATE THE GUTS OF THAT SADISTIC WIFE-BEATER.

WHY NOT POOL OUR BULLETS FOR THIS ONE?
I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK. MY FINGER WAS STARTING TO TWITCH.
HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR WHISKEY?

BEER
I'M EASY, AS LONG AS YOU DON'T TRY TO SLIP ME A MICKEY.
YOU'RE A REAL ANGEL, MAX.
IT WAS GOOD STUFF, TASTED SWEET AS HONEY GOING DOWN.
NOTHING PERSONAL. CAN'T RISK YOU GOING BERSERK AND GETTING LISA KILLED.
UUNHH...


THE NIGHTMARE WAS ALWAYS THE SAME.
VIOLENT SHAPES MOVING IN DARKNESS, OLD AND UGLY. THE KILLER'S MAD LAUGHTER WAS A RIDDLE FILLED WITH WICKED INNUENDO.
SOMEWHERE THE BABY WAS CRYING.

ALEX AND I HAD A FEW MOMENTS OF GLORY BETWEEN US.

CRIME-FIGHTING COMRADES, THE BEST IN NYPD-DEA COLLABORATIVE TEAM--

GOOD-HEARTED MACHO BULLSHIT LIKE THAT.

I WOULD HAVE GIVEN ANYTHING TO HAVE HIM HERE AS MY BACKUP.

NO SUCH LUCK. NO LUCK AT ALL.

THE PAYNE FAMILY.

HAPPINESS CAPTURED IN A POLAROID MOMENT.

I HAD THOUGHT IT WOULD LAST FOREVER. "TILL DEATH DO US PART..."

I DIDN'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT. AS LONG AS I DIDN'T, IT COULD NEVER HAPPEN--

BUT I HAD BROKEN MY OWN RULE, THE THOUGHT HAD ALREADY SLIPPED IN.

FEAR WAS RUSTY NEEDLES POKING AT MY BRAIN. COLD AND SCALY, IT SLITHERED DOWN MY CHEST.

MICHELLE WAS WORKING PART-TIME IN THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE.

HER DIARY WAS OPEN ON TODAY'S ENTRY, HER HANDWRITING ALL PRETTY CURVES.

"... AN ARMY DOSSIER FOUND ITS WAY TO MY DESK YESTERDAY. VALHALLA? ISN'T THAT A NORSE MYTH? SOMETHING ABOUT VIKINGS? I TRIED TO TELL MAX ABOUT IT BUT HE WAS BUSY, THAT CUTE FROWN ON HIS BROW. GUESS IT'S NOTHING, JUST A MIX-UP AT THE COURIER SERVICE..."

FROM NOW ON I WOULD ALWAYS FIND TIME FOR HER.

IT WAS A HOLLOW PROMISE.

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE.

MAX PAYNE™
PART II: A COLD DAY IN HELL
CHAPTER ONE: THE BASEBALL BAT

I WOKE UP IN A BAD DREAM.
MY HEAD FELT TWO SIZES TOO SMALL FOR MY BRAIN--
MAX PAYNE, I ENVY YOUR NAME.
AND THE KILLER WAS SMILING.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU. I'M FRANKIE "THE BAT" NIAGARA.
NIAGARA AS IN YOU CRY A LOT?
HE HAD A BASEBALL BAT, AND I WAS TIED TO A CHAIR. PISSING HIM OFF WAS THE SMART THING TO DO.

KRAKK!
KRUNCH!
KRAKK!

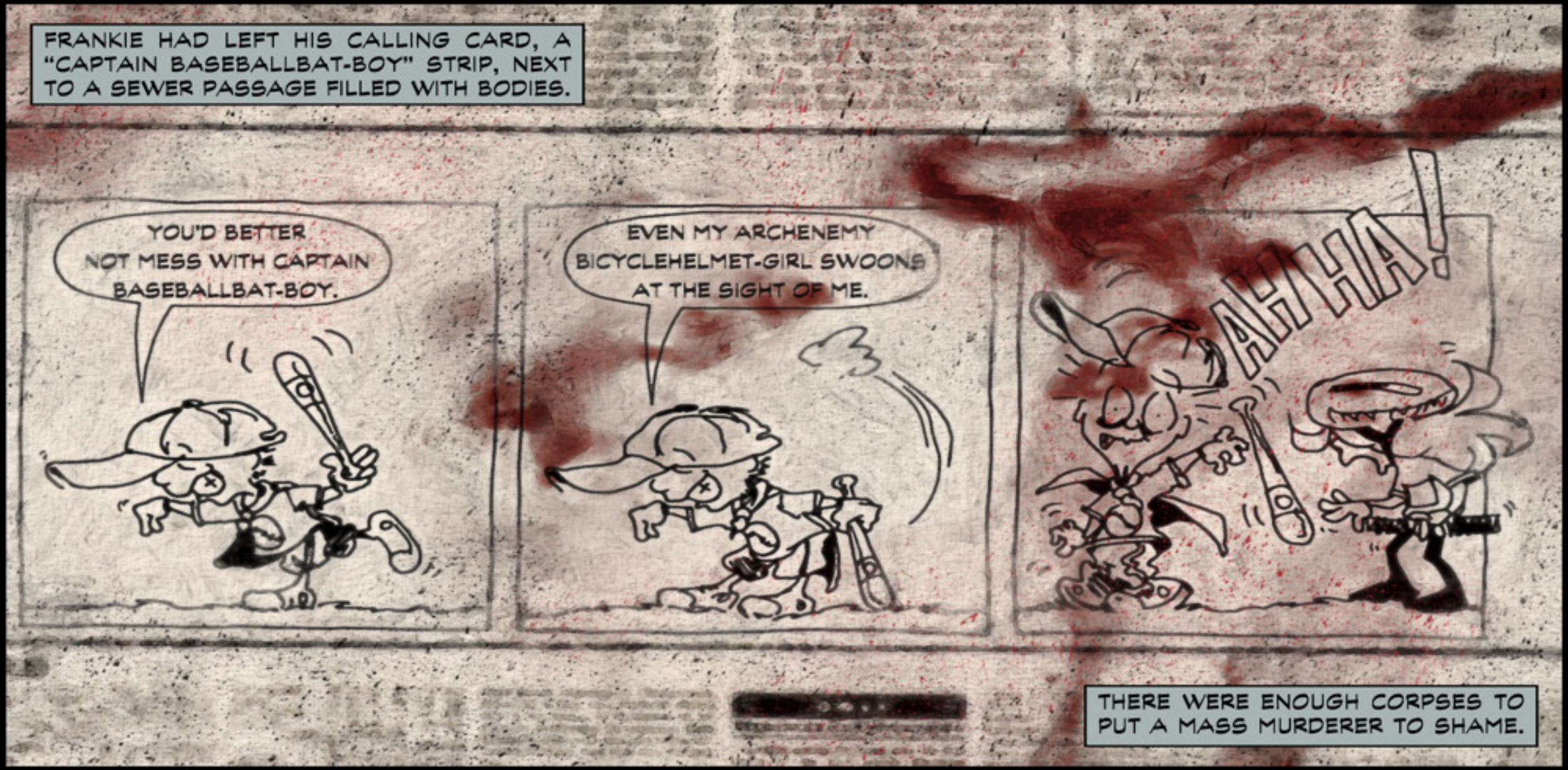
NOTHIN' WRONG WITH A LITTLE LAUGH NOW AND THEN.
TAKE ME FOR EXAMPLE. I LOVE TO WATCH CARTOONS.
CARTOON VIOLENCE'S A FASCINATIN' THING.
LET'S TAKE A BREAK--
I NEED TO TAKE A LEAK AND MAYBE GRAB A COLD ONE AT THE BAR. DON'T WORRY, I'LL BE BACK TO FINISH THIS OFF--
AN' THEN IT'S CHECKOUT TIME.
YOU PLAY, YOU PAY, YOU BASTARD.
HE SWAGGERED OUT, AND THE DOOR CLANGED SHUT BEHIND HIM, LOCKS CLICKING INTO PLACE.

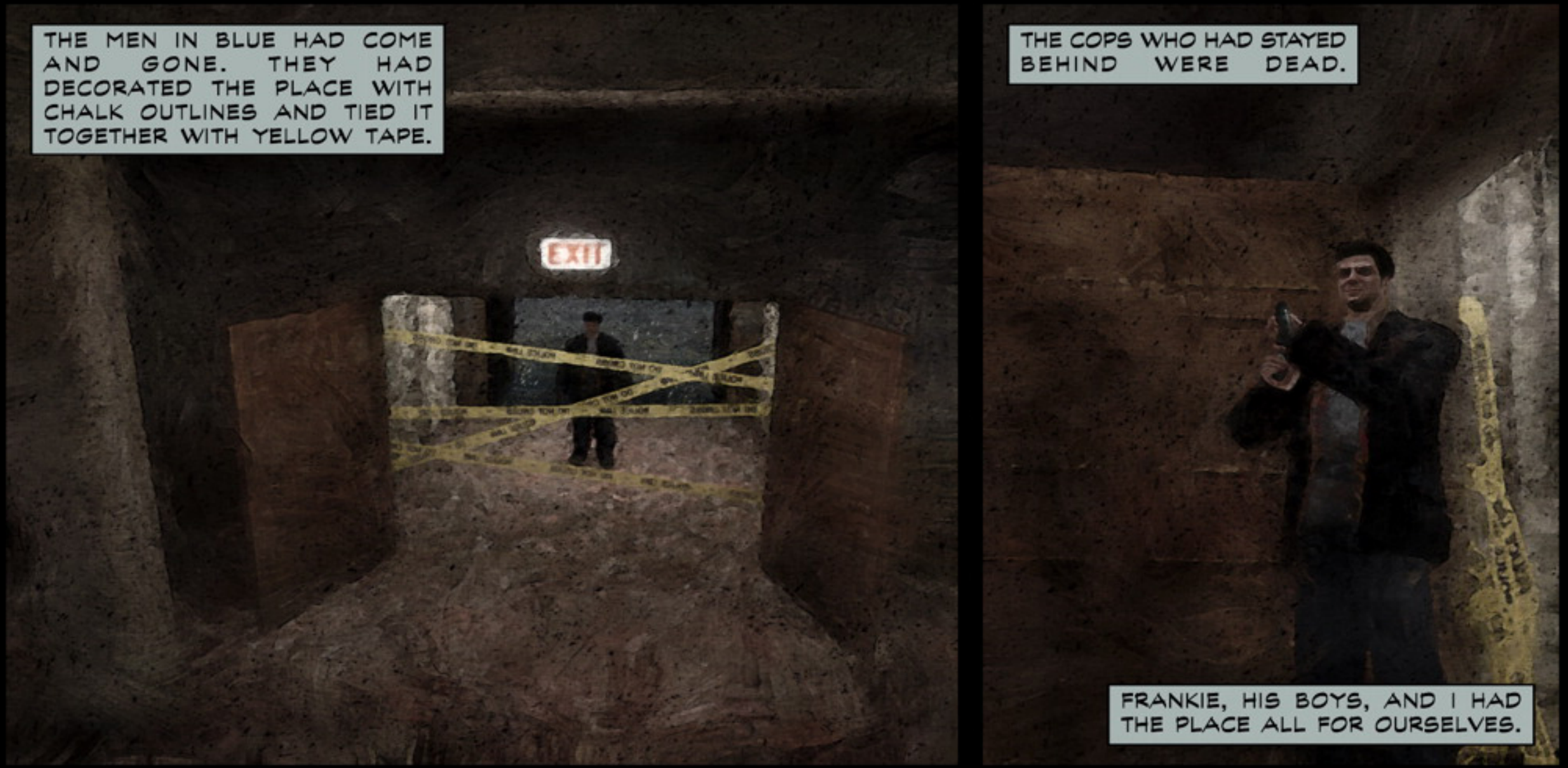
EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES.
MINE HADN'T BEEN TO CRACK JOKES ABOUT THE GOON WITH THE BAT, HE'D HAVE CRACKED MY SKULL REGARDLESS. IT HADN'T EVEN BEEN TO TRUST A GIRL WITH A GUN.

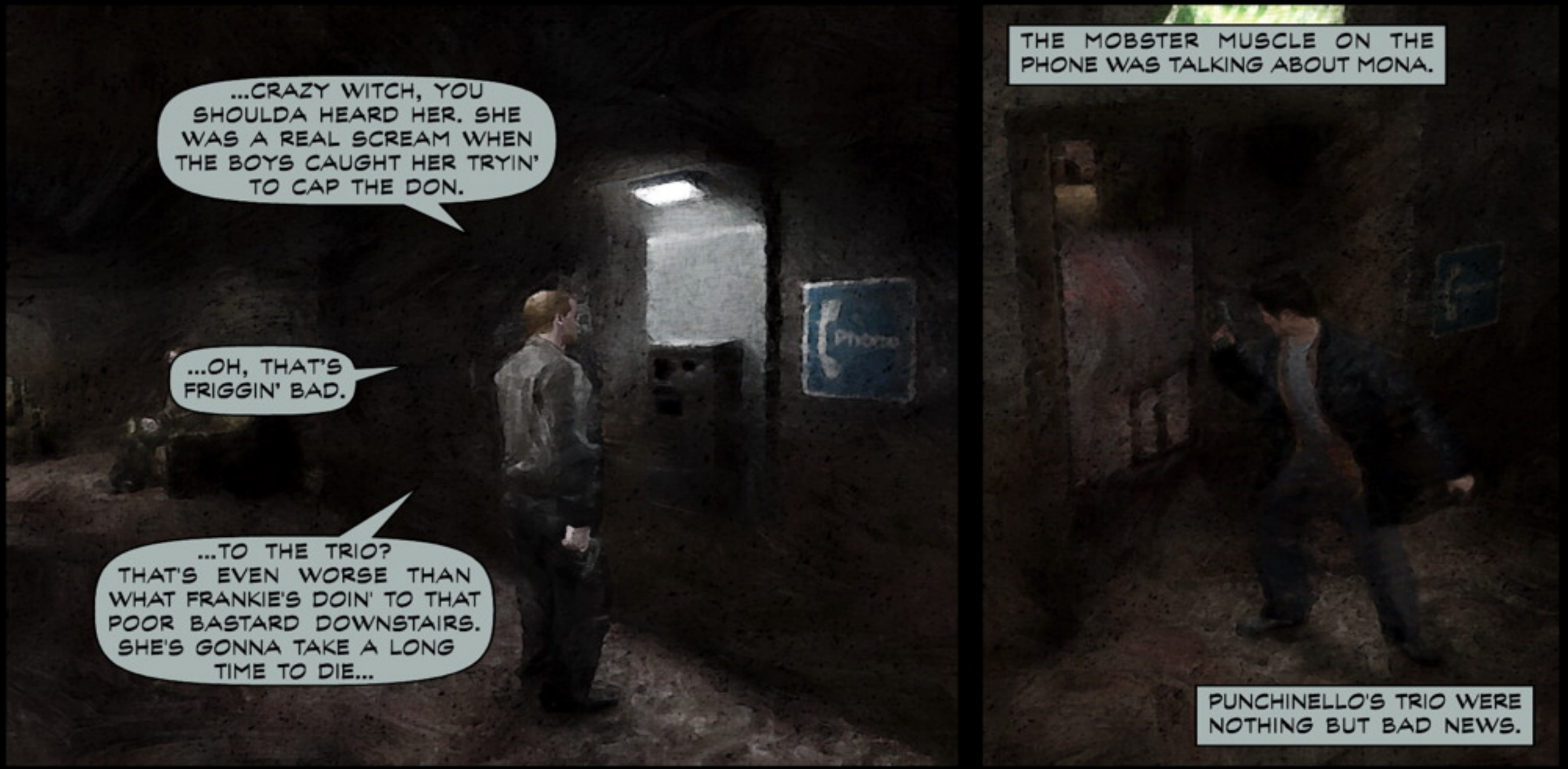
I HAD BLINDLY GONE AFTER THE FIRST BAD GUY ON MY HIT LIST WHEN I SHOULD HAVE BEEN AIMING FURTHER UP THE LADDER, AT THE HEAD OF THE PUNCHINELLO FAMILY.
KRAKK!
I COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO BE PISSED AT MONA. GUESS I HAD A SOFT SPOT FOR A PRETTY FACE--

BUT WHEN SOMEBODY DECIDES TO PLAY BASEBALL WITH YOUR HEAD, YOU TEND TO GET SORE.

THEY HAD DRAGGED ME BACK TO THE BASEMENT OF LUPINO'S HOTEL.
I WAS BEATEN, BRUISED, AND BLUE. I FELT LIKE THE CHAIR I HAD BROKEN TO GET FREE.
ALL I HAD WAS NIAGARA'S BAT, STICKY WITH MY OWN BLOOD.


FRANKIE HAD LEFT HIS CALLING CARD, A "CAPTAIN BASEBALLBAT-BOY" STRIP, NEXT TO A SEWER PASSAGE FILLED WITH BODIES.
YOU'D BETTER NOT MESS WITH CAPTAIN BASEBALLBAT-BOY.
EVEN MY ARCHENEMY BICYCLEHELMET-GIRL SWOONS AT THE SIGHT OF ME.
AH-HA!
THERE WERE ENOUGH CORPSES TO PUT A MASS MURDERER TO SHAME.


THE MEN IN BLUE HAD COME AND GONE. THEY HAD DECORATED THE PLACE WITH CHALK OUTLINES AND TIED IT TOGETHER WITH YELLOW TAPE.
EXIT
THE COPS WHO HAD STAYED BEHIND WERE DEAD.
FRANKIE, HIS BOYS, AND I HAD THE PLACE ALL FOR OURSELVES.


...CRAZY WITCH, YOU SHOULDA HEARD HER. SHE WAS A REAL SCREAM WHEN THE BOYS CAUGHT HER TRYIN' TO CAP THE DON.
...OH, THAT'S FRIGGIN' BAD.
...TO THE TRIO? THAT'S EVEN WORSE THAN WHAT FRANKIE'S DOIN' TO THAT POOR BASTARD DOWNSTAIRS. SHE'S GONNA TAKE A LONG TIME TO DIE...
PHONE
THE MOBSTER MUSCLE ON THE PHONE WAS TALKING ABOUT MONA.
PUNCHINELLO'S TRIO WERE NOTHING BUT BAD NEWS.

... THE FACT REMAINS THAT ALL THE VICTIMS SO FAR IDENTIFIED IN THE RAGNA ROCK SHOOTING HAVE BEEN KNOWN CRIMINALS, MANY OF WHOM HAD LARGE DOSES OF V IN THEIR BLOOD...

RELIABLE SOURCES SAY THAT MAX PAYNE WAS ALSO AMONG THOSE KILLED, ALTHOUGH NO BODY HAS BEEN RECOVERED AT THIS TIME...

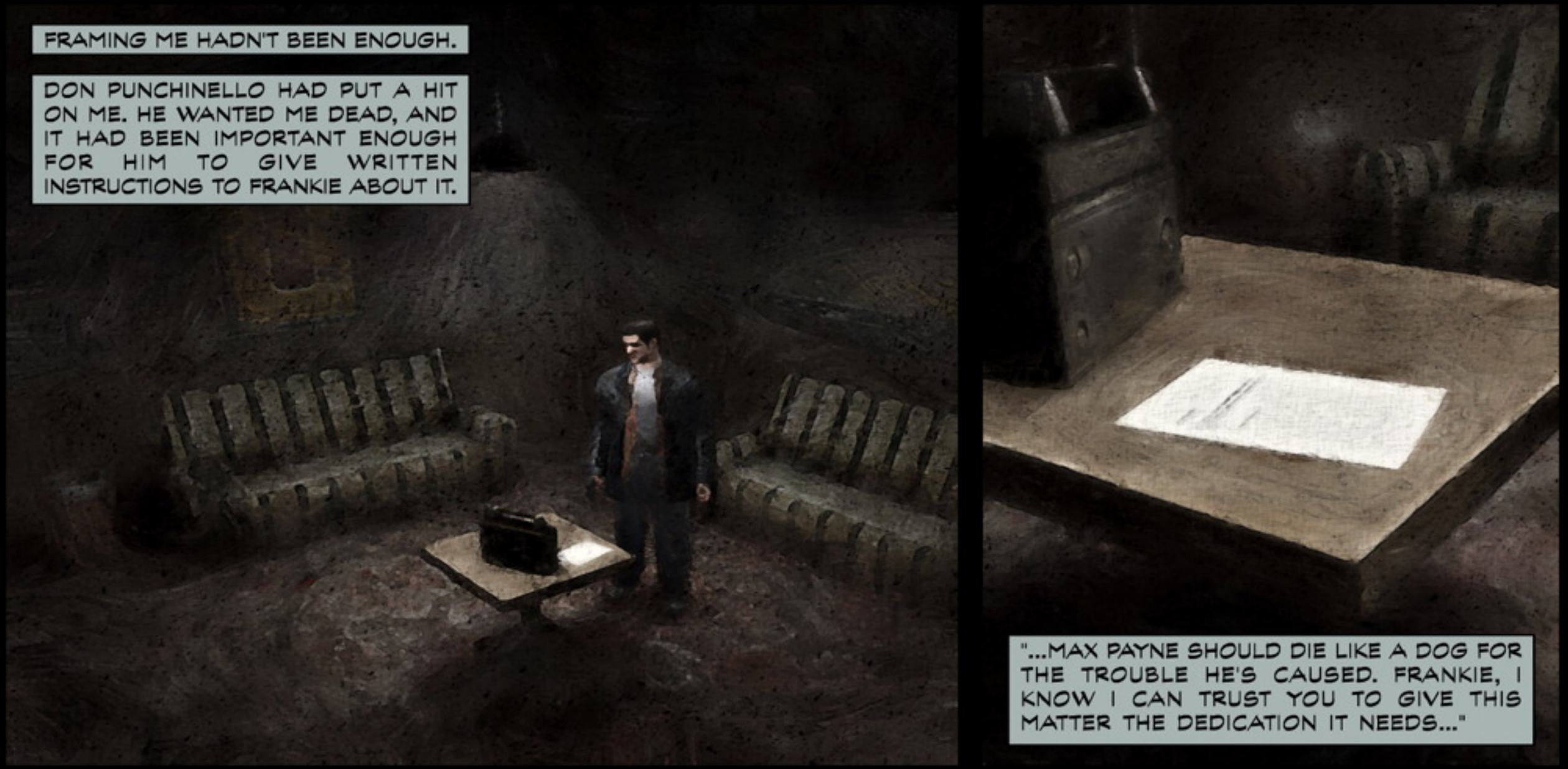
"RELIABLE SOURCES." THAT MEANT SOMEBODY THOUGHT THE MAFIA HAD ME, AND DIDN'T WANT THE COPS SNOOPING AROUND ANYMORE.

THE BODY WOULD BE DELIVERED TO THEM BARELY RECOGNIZABLE. CASE CLOSED.

DON PUNCHINELLO HAD THE POWER TO BE THAT RELIABLE SOURCE, WHICH WAS NO NEWS--

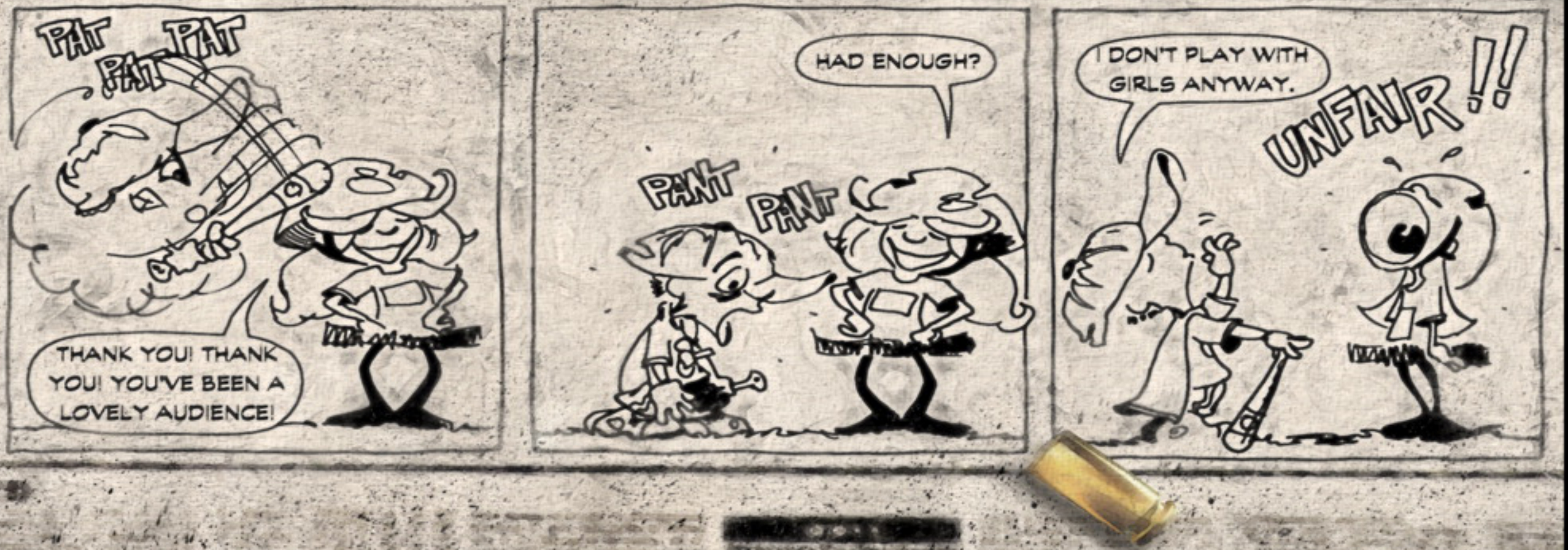
KLIK

BUT HIS NEWS WAS OLD NEWS.


FRAMING ME HADN'T BEEN ENOUGH.
DON PUNCHINELLO HAD PUT A HIT ON ME. HE WANTED ME DEAD, AND IT HAD BEEN IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR HIM TO GIVE WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS TO FRANKIE ABOUT IT.
"...MAX PAYNE SHOULD DIE LIKE A DOG FOR THE TROUBLE HE'S CAUSED. FRANKIE, I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU TO GIVE THIS MATTER THE DEDICATION IT NEEDS..."

THE HOTEL BAR WAS FAST DEVELOPING QUITE A HISTORY.
TRUE TO HIS WORDS, FRANKIE WAS THERE, HAVING A BEER.

JESUS CHRIST! HOW THE HELL DID YA GET LOOSE?
GOT BORED WAITING, THOUGHT - WHAT THE HELL, WE COULD JUST AS WELL FINISH THIS HERE.


PAT PAT PAT
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! YOU'VE BEEN A LOVELY AUDIENCE!
HAD ENOUGH?
PANT PANT
I DON'T PLAY WITH GIRLS ANYWAY.
UNFAIR!!

MAX PAYNE™
PART II: A COLD DAY IN HELL
CHAPTER TWO: AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

I SPOTTED THE TAIL AS SOON AS I LEFT THE HOTEL. A BIG BLACK MERCEDES.

VVRROOOOMMM!!!
SCRREEEECH!
I HAD SEEN THE CAR BEFORE. THAT TIME IT HAD HERALDED IMPRESSIVE EXPLOSIONS.

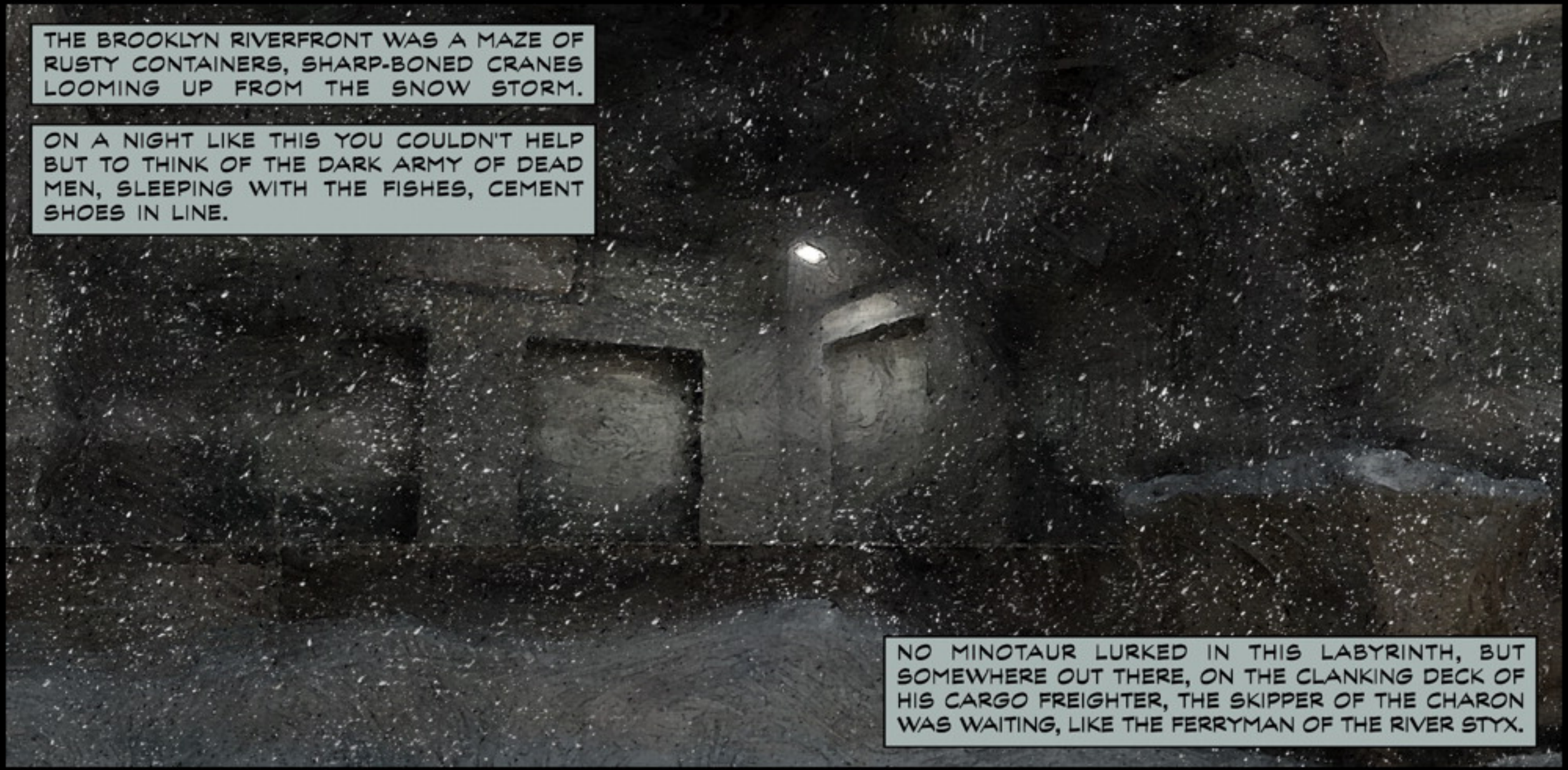
VLADIMIR WAS BACK.
BANG! YOU'RE DEAD, MAX PAYNE.
I MIGHT HAVE LAUGHED, IF I HAD REMEMBERED HOW.

WHAT'S THIS SUPPOSED TO BE? COPS AND ROBBERS?
LOOK, YOU WANT SOMETHING WITH ME, GET IN LINE.
PEACE, MAN, RELAX. YOU KNOW YOU ARE A REAL NEWS ITEM? "ARMED AND DANGEROUS."
I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE... I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SAY THAT.
IT'S A BUM RAP, I'VE BEEN FRAMED.
THAT'S A MOOT POINT. WHATEVER YOU DID OR DID NOT DO, I'M SURE YOU HAD A GOOD REASON FOR DOING IT. WANT TO HEAR ME OUT?
I'M LISTENING.

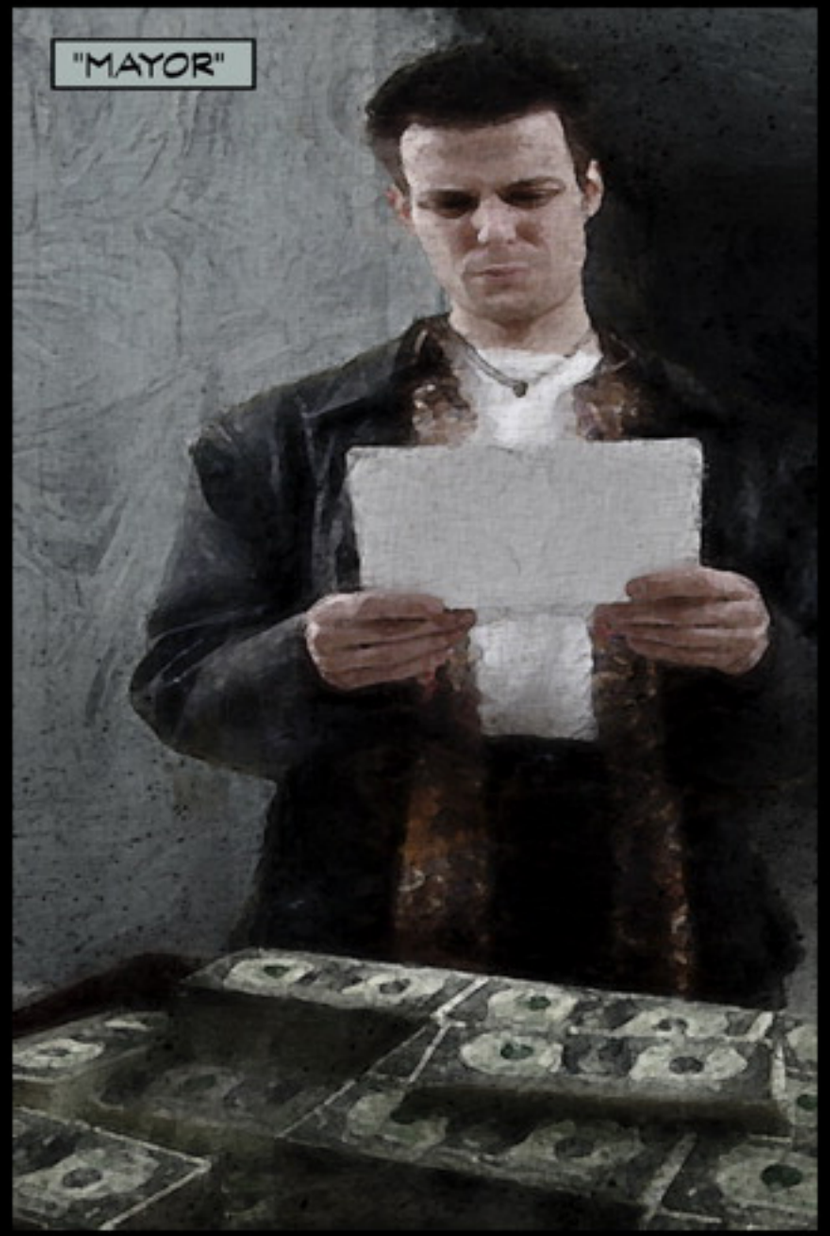
PUNCHINELLO MESSING WITH V IS BAD FOR BUSINESS ALL AROUND. BUT THAT'S NOT ALL.
THERE IS THIS GUY, BORIS DIME, USED TO PULL JOBS FOR ME--

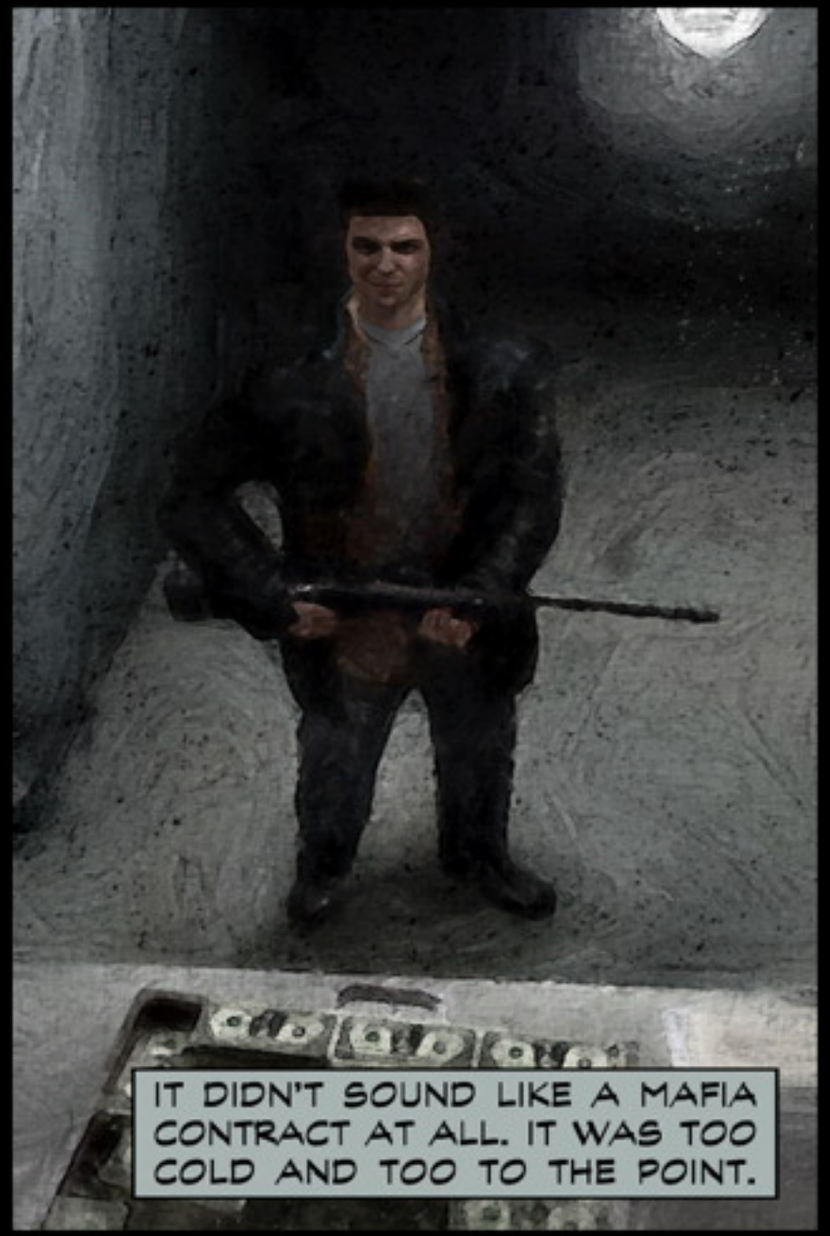
"HE'S THE CAPTAIN OF THE CARGO SHIP 'CHARON.' NOW THE BASTARD TURNCOAT HAS GONE OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE. PUNCHINELLO'S."
"THE SHIP'S LOADED WITH HI-RES HARDWARE, GUNS, MY BUSINESS."
CHARON
"IF PUNCHINELLO GETS HOLD OF THAT CARGO, HE'S WON AND I HAVE LOST, AND YOU'LL HAVE YOUR WORK CUT OUT FOR YOU."

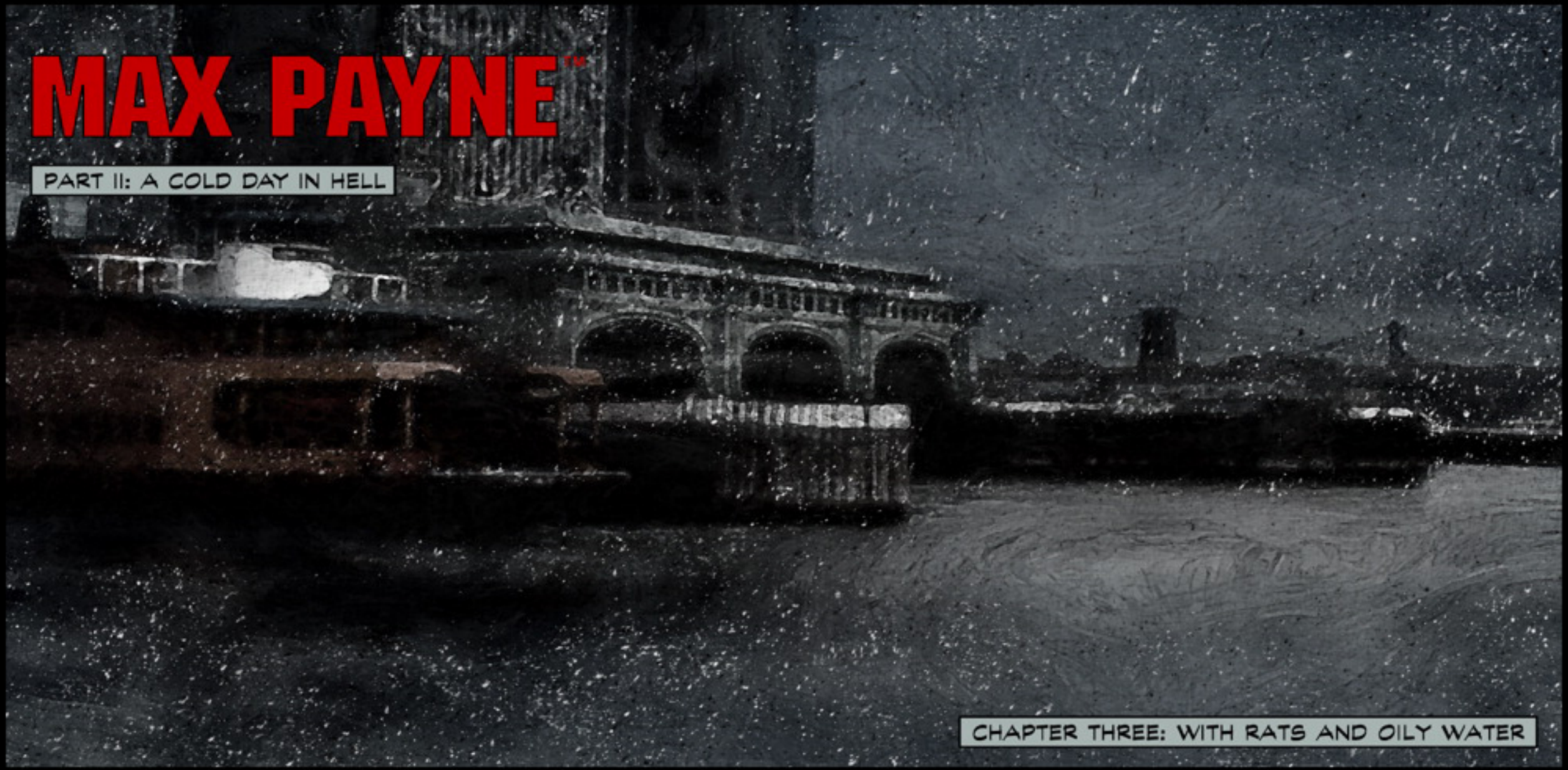
IF YOU WANT TO GET TO PUNCHINELLO, YOU WILL NEED HEAVY DUTY PERSUADERS--
I'M JUST THE MAN TO GET THEM FOR YOU.
CHANGE THE SHIP BACK UNDER MY FLAG, MAYBE POP TWO IN THE TRAITOR DIME'S HEAD WHILE YOU ARE AT IT--
YOU'LL GET ENOUGH GUNS TO START THE APOCALYPSE.
YOU IN OR OUT?
"LETS GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD."
VLADIMIR WAS ONE OF THOSE OLD-TIME BAD GUYS WITH HONOR AND MORALS, WHICH MADE HIM ALMOST ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS.
NONE OF US WAS A SAINT.


THE BROOKLYN RIVERFRONT WAS A MAZE OF RUSTY CONTAINERS, SHARP-BONED CRANES LOOMING UP FROM THE SNOW STORM.
ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS YOU COULDN'T HELP BUT TO THINK OF THE DARK ARMY OF DEAD MEN, SLEEPING WITH THE FISHES, CEMENT SHOES IN LINE.
NO MINOTAUR LURKED IN THIS LABYRINTH, BUT SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, ON THE CLANKING DECK OF HIS CARGO FREIGHTER, THE SKIPPER OF THE CHARON WAS WAITING, LIKE THE FERRYMAN OF THE RIVER STYX.

RICO MUERTE HAD COME TO TOWN TO DO MORE THAN JUST SORT OUT FAMILY TROUBLES.
EXHIBITS #1, 2 AND 3: A BRIEFCASE OF MONEY, A SNIPER RIFLE, AND AN ENVELOPE WITH ONE WORD NEATLY PRINTED ON A FOLDED PIECE OF EXPENSIVE PAPER.


"MAYOR"


IT DIDN'T SOUND LIKE A MAFIA CONTRACT AT ALL. IT WAS TOO COLD AND TOO TO THE POINT.


MAX PAYNE™
PART II: A COLD DAY IN HELL
CHAPTER THREE: WITH RATS AND OILY WATER

RUST HAD CREPT OVER THE SIDES OF THE CARGO STEAMER A LONG TIME AGO.
CHARON
BORIS DIME WOULD BE ON BOARD.
I'D HAVE TO SMOKE HALF OF HIS CREW TO EVEN GET NEAR THE GANGPLANK.
THE GUNS WERE PROBABLY BEING KEPT IN THE HOLD, BURIED AMIDST THE RATS AND OILY WATER.

DIME? ANGELO PUNCHINELLO HERE.
ANGIE! TELL ME, HOW MUCH DID DIME COST YOU? I BET IT WAS MORE THAN HIS NAME.
MAX PAYNE!?
RIGHT THE FIRST TIME.

YOU'RE DEAD, PUNK!
YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT CONFUSING ME WITH BORIS HERE?
BUT YOU ARE RIGHT OF COURSE. PRETTY SOON, WE SHOULD GET TOGETHER AND HAVE A TALK.
YOU--

PISSING PUNCHINELLO OFF WAS A DANGEROUS GAME. BUT WHEN PEOPLE GET MAD, THEY MAKE MISTAKES. I SHOULD KNOW.
KLIK
THAT'S WHERE I WANTED PUNCHINELLO, MAD ENOUGH TO TRIP OVER HIS OWN FEET, PREFERABLY INTO A GRAVE.

DID YOU GET EVERYTHING YOU NEED?
CHECK.
I OWE YOU. ANYTHING YOU NEED --
THIS IS MY SOLO. WHEN I'M THROUGH, PUNCHINELLO WON'T BE ANYBODY'S PROBLEM ANYMORE.
CLEAR AS VODKA. BUT ANYTIME YOU GET BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE, JUST WHISTLE. THIS COULD BE THE BEGINNING OF A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP.
YOU REALLY GET A BANG OUT OF THIS BIG TIME GANGSTER ACT, DON'T YOU?

MAX PAYNE™
PART II: A COLD DAY IN HELL
CHAPTER FOUR: PUT OUT MY FLAMES WITH GASOLINE

EVEN WITH ALL THIS FIREPOWER, I FIGURED I COULDN'T GET TO PUNCHINELLO AT HIS MANOR.

I COULD ONLY HOPE THAT HE WOULDN'T PASS A CHANCE TO HEAR ME BEG, TO SEE HE'S WON.

THIS IS MAX PAYNE. I WANT TO CUT A DEAL.

PAYNE! YOU'RE A DEAD MAN!
THAT'S WHAT EVERYBODY KEEPS TELLING ME. I'VE GOT YOUR SHIP AND HER CARGO. I WANT TO MEET. NO PAYNE, NO GAIN, CAPICE?
...YOU KNOW MY RESTAURANT?
YEAH, I KNOW IT.
ONE HOUR.
PUNCHINELLO'S RESTAURANT HAD SEEN BETTER DAYS.

SNOW WAS FALLING LIKE ASHES FROM POST-APOCALYPTIC SKIES, BUT THAT WAS OUTSIDE. THINGS WOULD SOON GET HOT IN THE DON'S RESTAURANT.
Casa di Angelo
I KNEW IT WAS A LONG SHOT, ANGELO PUNCHINELLO ACTUALLY SHOWING UP, BUT THERE WAS NO CRIME IN HOPING.

VLAD HAD SEEN MY SMOKE SIGNALS. THE MERCEDES WAS REVVING TO GO, ALMOST DROWNING OUT THE BANSHEE WAIL OF THE SIRENS.
YOU COMING?

WE'LL DROP YOU OFF AT THE PUNCHINELLO MANOR.
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.

WHEN THIS IS OVER, LOOK ME UP. I COULD USE A PROFESSIONAL LIKE YOU.
I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND.

MAX PAYNE™
PART II: A COLD DAY IN HELL
NO PUBLIC ACCESS
CHAPTER FIVE: ANGEL OF DEATH

THE NIGHT GROANED WITH COLD. THE GARDEN LIGHTS FLICKERED NERVOUSLY. IN THEIR LIGHT THE FALLING SNOW WAS DEAD WHITE BEFORE THE DARKNESS ATE IT UP.
I HAD HEARD THE STORIES. THE TRIO WERE MAD DOGS. THEY'D HAVE HUNG THE HEADS OF THEIR ENEMIES OVER THE MANOR GATES IF THE CAPO HAD ONLY LET THEM.

PUNCHINELLO WANTED PAYNE.
HE'D SEE THE PAIN.

THE TRICK IN MY SITUATION WAS THAT THERE WAS NO TRICK, NO MATTER WHAT THE MOVIES TELL YOU--
NO RULES, NO SECRET MANTRA, NO ROAD MAP.

IT WASN'T ABOUT HOW SMART OR HOW GOOD YOU WERE.
IT WAS CHAOS AND LUCK, AND ANYONE WHO THOUGHT DIFFERENT WAS A FOOL.

ALL YOU COULD DO WAS TO HANG ON MADLY, AS LONG AND HARD AS YOU COULD.

SOMEONE HAD GRACIOUSLY LEFT THE BACKDOOR OPEN FOR ME AND KILLED THE GUARDS...
MY MONEY WAS ON MONA.

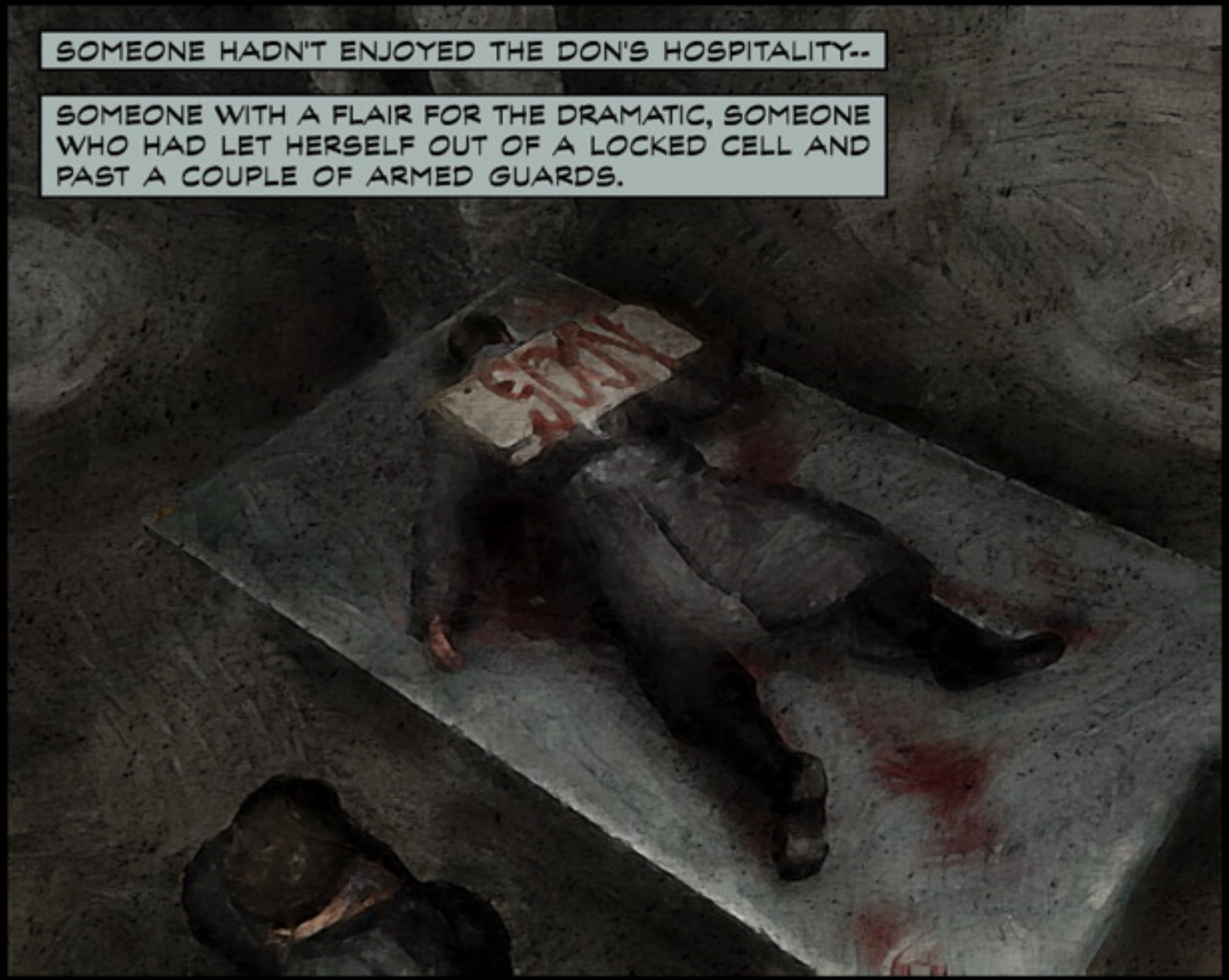
I KNEW THAT THE TRIO WOULD BE STANDING BETWEEN ME AND PUNCHINELLO. I HAD READ THEIR RAP SHEETS, THICK AS PHONEBOOKS.

KLIK!
NO ONE WOULD BE WALKING OUT OF HERE ALIVE.

THE NUMBING COLD OF THE BROKEN NIGHT HAD FOLLOWED ME IN.
UPSTAIRS THE TRIO TANGOED DOWN THE MANOR HALLS TO THE SILENT RHYTHM OF THEIR MURDEROUS HEARTS, THE BLOOD OF THEIR VICTIMS RUST ON THEIR LIPS.
VINCE MUGNAIO, PILATE PROVIDENCE AKA "THE BIG BROTHER", AND JOE "DEADPAN" SALEM.
THE PISTOL WAS A FROZEN LUMP IN MY HAND, PIERCING THE SKIN, GNAWING ME TO THE BONE.

SOMEONE HADN'T ENJOYED THE DON'S HOSPITALITY--

SOMEONE WITH A FLAIR FOR THE DRAMATIC, SOMEONE WHO HAD LET HERSELF OUT OF A LOCKED CELL AND PAST A COUPLE OF ARMED GUARDS.



MY THOUGHTS WERE ON MONA AGAIN.

I COULD ONLY HOPE SHE WAS A GOOD ENOUGH GAMBLER TO WALK AWAY WHILE SHE WAS STILL WINNING--

BEFORE SHE'D RUN INTO THE TRIO.

THE WORD ON LISA PUNCHINELLO WAS THAT SHE WAS A BIT OF A WITCH--

THE TAROT CARDS ON THE KITCHEN TABLE FIT THE PICTURE.

THEY WEREN'T MY KIND OF CARDS, BUT I WAS WILLING TO TAKE A CRACK AT THE HAND MRS. PUNCHINELLO HAD DEALT.

THE FIRST CARD WAS THE TOWER. MAYBE THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE MANOR.

IT GOT EASY AFTER THAT.

THE DEVIL WAS THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE, AND DEATH WAS ME, COMING FOR HIM.

"YOU'RE A REAL ANGEL, MAX."
I COULDN'T TELL WHETHER IT WAS MONA OR HER SISTER. THE BODY WAS A MESS.
THE SICK BASTARD HAD REALLY GOTTEN A KICK OUT OF IT.

SEEING HER LYING THERE GOT ME THINKING ABOUT ANOTHER WOMAN'S BODY ON ANOTHER BED, GOT ME THINKING ABOUT A FALLEN CRADLE.

MAX PAYNE?
TALK TO ME.

ALFRED WODEN.
YOU'VE GOT COMPANY. AN ARMED HELICOPTER JUST LANDED ON THE MANOR GROUNDS.

YOU MUST HURRY.
THE MORE THE MERRIER.

... OUTSIDE MY DOOR... HURRY...
HE'S COMING FOR ME... YOU'VE GOTTA HURRY... PLEASE...

I COULD HEAR PUNCHINELLO ON THE PHONE, BEGGING FOR HELP.
KRAKK!

HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN SAYING HIS GOODBYES.

PUNCHINELLO WAS A PUSHOVER.
THE MOMENT I STEPPED INTO THE ROOM HE FOLDED LIKE A DEUCE BEFORE A ROYAL FLUSH.
NO, WAIT! I WAS JUST DOIN' WHAT I WAS TOLD, COULDN'T REFUSE--
SHE'S SOMEONE HIGH UP, GOVERNMENT MAYBE, I DON'T KNOW --
HE WAS TRYING TO BUY MORE SAND FOR HIS HOURGLASS.
I WASN'T SELLING ANY.

I COULD TELL WHEN I WAS OUTGUNNED. IT WAS TIME TO TAKE ANOTHER BEATING.
THE MYSTERY WITCH WAS A REAL BARRACUDA, TROUBLE ON DAGGER-HEELS, A SMOKING ASSAULT RIFLE IN HER HAND, AND AN ARMY OF KILLER SUITS BEHIND HER.

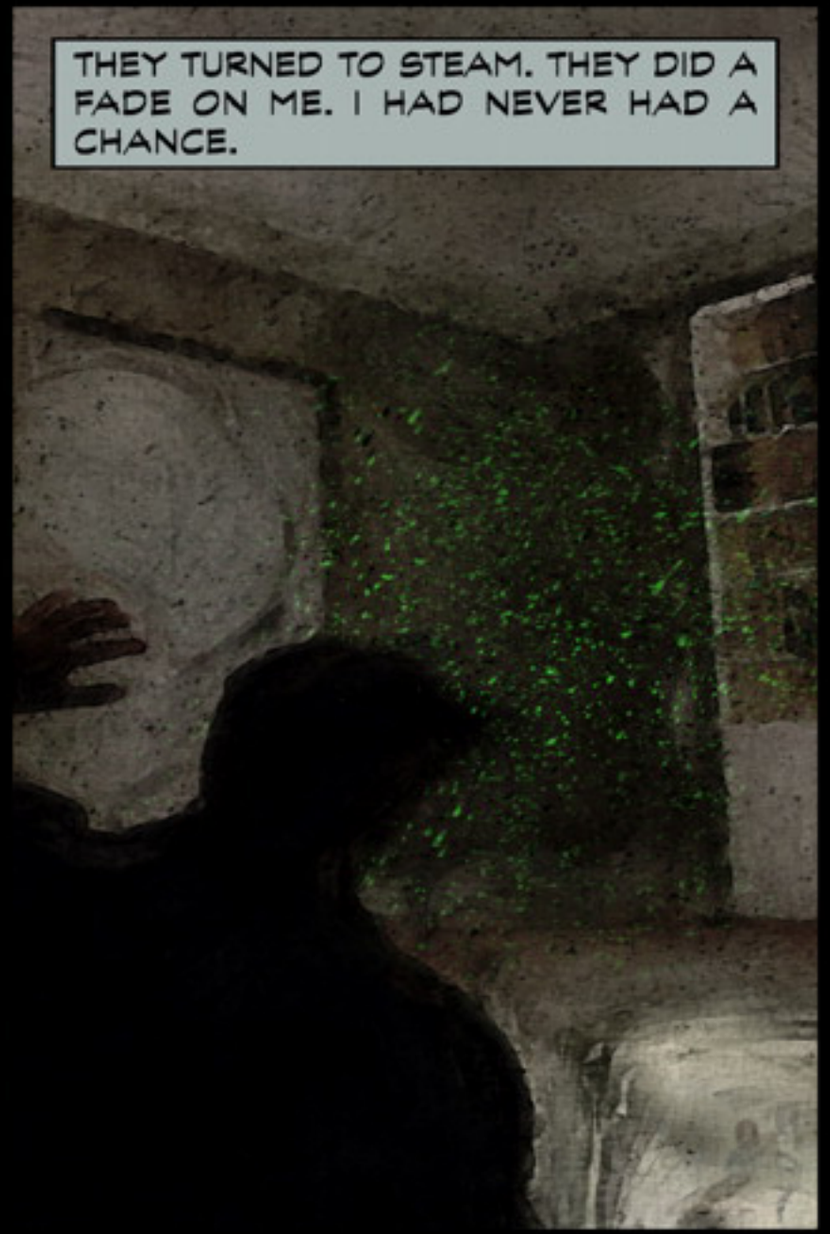
HOW SWEET, I GET TO KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE.

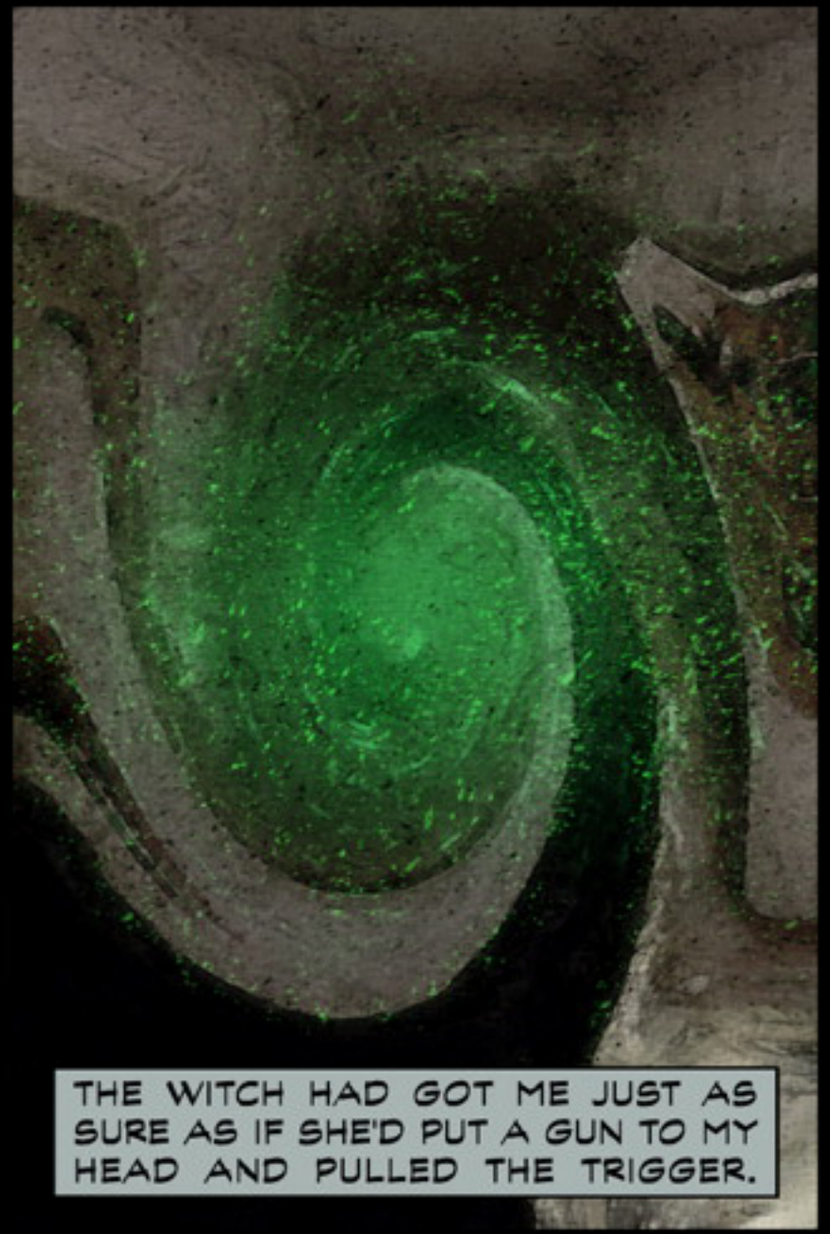
SOONER OR LATER IT WAS GOING TO CATCH UP WITH YOU.
MR. PAYNE. IT'S TIME TO SHOW YOU THE BENEFITS OF MY BREW.
BE A GOOD BOY NOW.
YOU'D FIND THAT LADY LUCK WAS REALLY A HOOKER, AND YOU WERE FRESH OUT OF CASH.

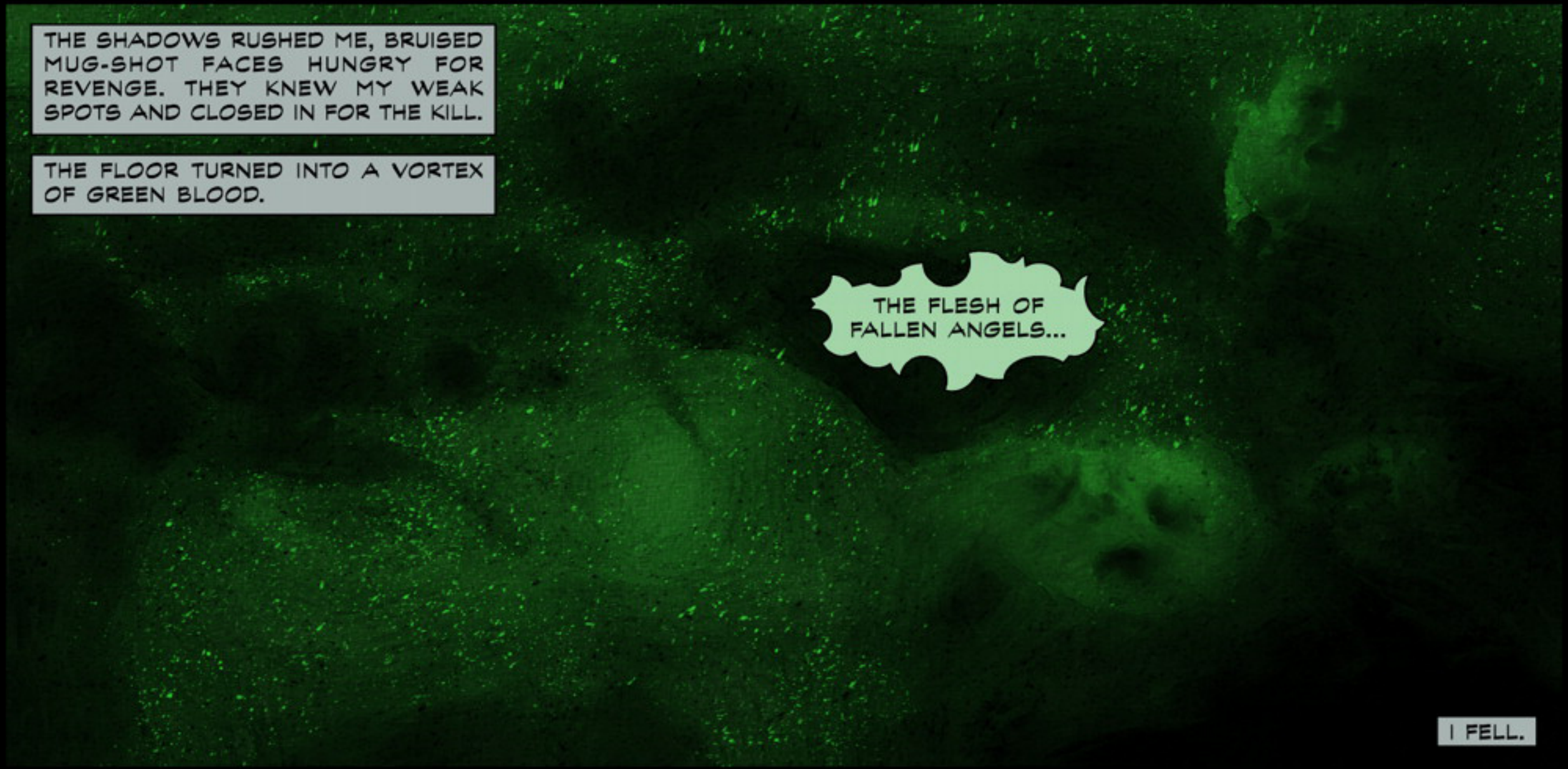
MAX PAYNE™

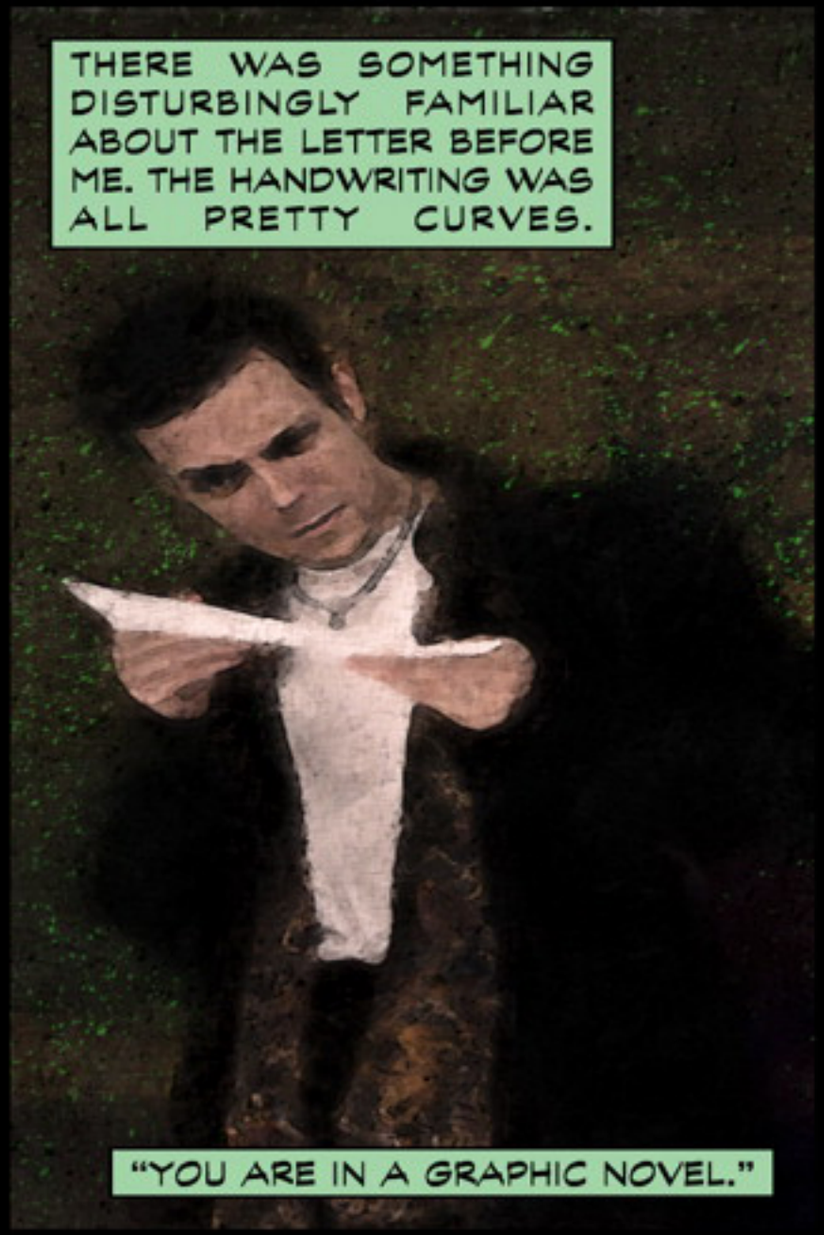
PART III: A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN

GENTLEMEN, WE ARE DONE HERE. TAKE ME TO COLD STEEL.
SHE HAD JUST GIVEN ME AN O.D. OF VALKYR. I COULD FEEL GREEN FIRE EATING MY BRAINS.


THEY TURNED TO STEAM. THEY DID A FADE ON ME. I HAD NEVER HAD A CHANCE.

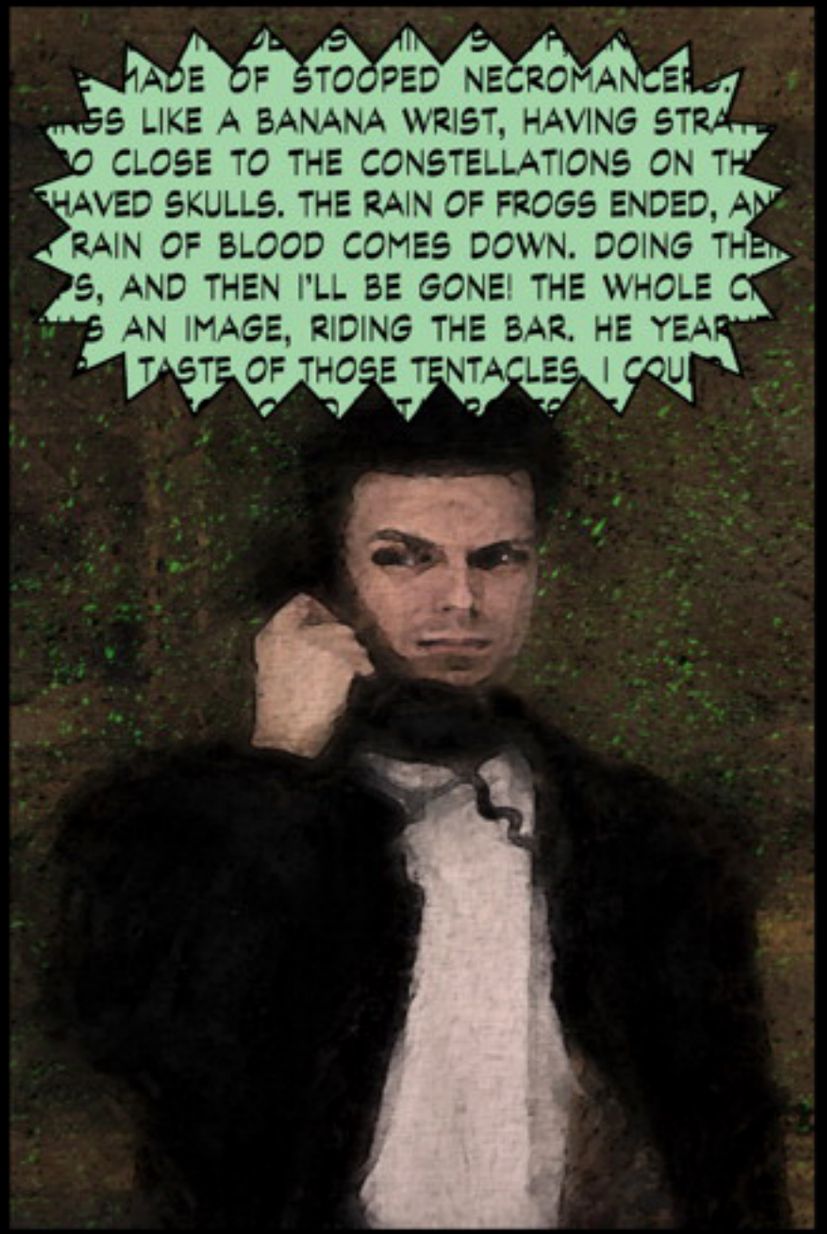

THE WITCH HAD GOT ME JUST AS SURE AS IF SHE'D PUT A GUN TO MY HEAD AND PULLED THE TRIGGER.


THE SHADOWS RUSHED ME, BRUISED MUG-SHOT FACES HUNGRY FOR REVENGE. THEY KNEW MY WEAK SPOTS AND CLOSED IN FOR THE KILL.
THE FLOOR TURNED INTO A VORTEX OF GREEN BLOOD.
THE FLESH OF FALLEN ANGELS...
I FELL.


THERE WAS SOMETHING DISTURBINGLY FAMILIAR ABOUT THE LETTER BEFORE ME. THE HANDWRITING WAS ALL PRETTY CURVES.
"YOU ARE IN A GRAPHIC NOVEL."

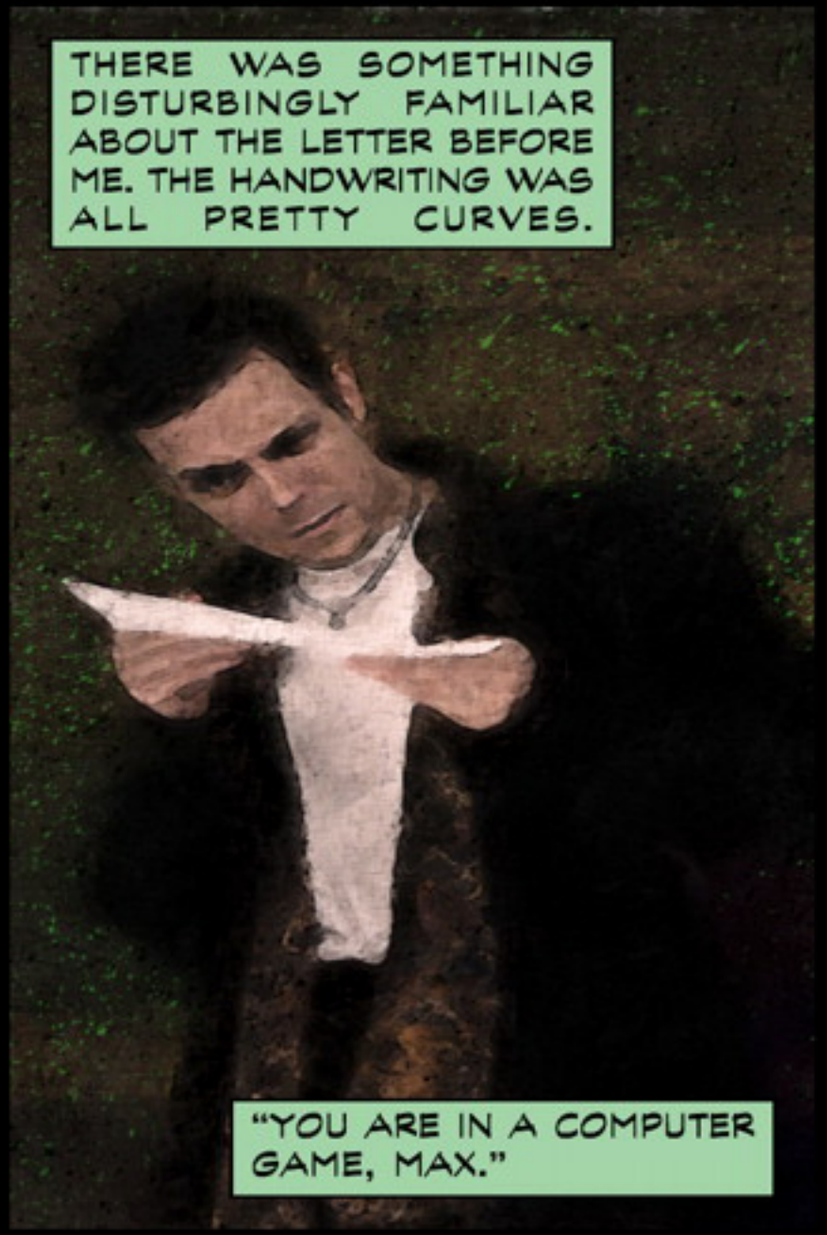
THE TRUTH SPLIT MY SKULL OPEN, A GLARING GREEN LIGHT WASHING THE LIES AWAY.
LISA PUNCHINELLO...?
YOUR SAFETY'S OFF, EVIL TWIN. YOU MIGH HURT SOMEONE WITH THA GUN OF YOURS.
LET'S TAKE A BREAK--
ALL OF MY PAST WAS JUST FRAGMENTED STILL SHOTS, WORDS HANGING IN THE AIR LIKE BALLOONS.

I WAS IN A GRAPHIC NOVEL.
FUNNY AS HELL, IT WAS THE MOST HORRIBLE THING I COULD THINK OF.


HADE OF STOOPED NECROMANCER
SS LIKE A BANANA WRIST, HAVING STRA
O CLOSE TO THE CONSTELLATIONS ON TH
HAVED SKULLS. THE RAIN OF FROGS ENDED, AN
RAIN OF BLOOD COMES DOWN. DOING THE
S, AND THEN I'LL BE GONE! THE WHOLE C
S AN IMAGE, RIDING THE BAR. HE YEAR
TASTE OF THOSE TENTACLES. I COU

IT WAS A BAD LINE AND A PRANK CALL, SOMEONE SPOUTING INSANE BABBLE.
I COULDN'T MAKE SENSE OF IT.

BUT I HAD AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF DÉJÀ VU. AND THE CALLER'S VOICE SOUNDED ODDLY FAMILIAR.


THERE WAS SOMETHING DISTURBINGLY FAMILIAR ABOUT THE LETTER BEFORE ME. THE HANDWRITING WAS ALL PRETTY CURVES.
"YOU ARE IN A COMPUTER GAME, MAX."

1 2 3 4 5
THE TRUTH WAS A BURNING GREEN CRACK THROUGH MY BRAIN.
WEAPON STATISTICS HANGING IN THE AIR, GLIMPSED OUT OF THE CORNER OF MY EYE. ENDLESS REPETITION OF THE ACT OF SHOOTING, TIME SLOWING DOWN TO SHOW OFF MY MOVES. THE PARANOID FEEL OF SOMEONE CONTROLLING MY EVERY STEP.

I WAS IN A COMPUTER GAME.
FUNNY AS HELL, IT WAS THE MOST HORRIBLE THING I COULD THINK OF.

...DON'T LOSE IT! IT'S VALKYR! THE DRUG! SNAP OUT OF IT! TRY TO REMEMBER...

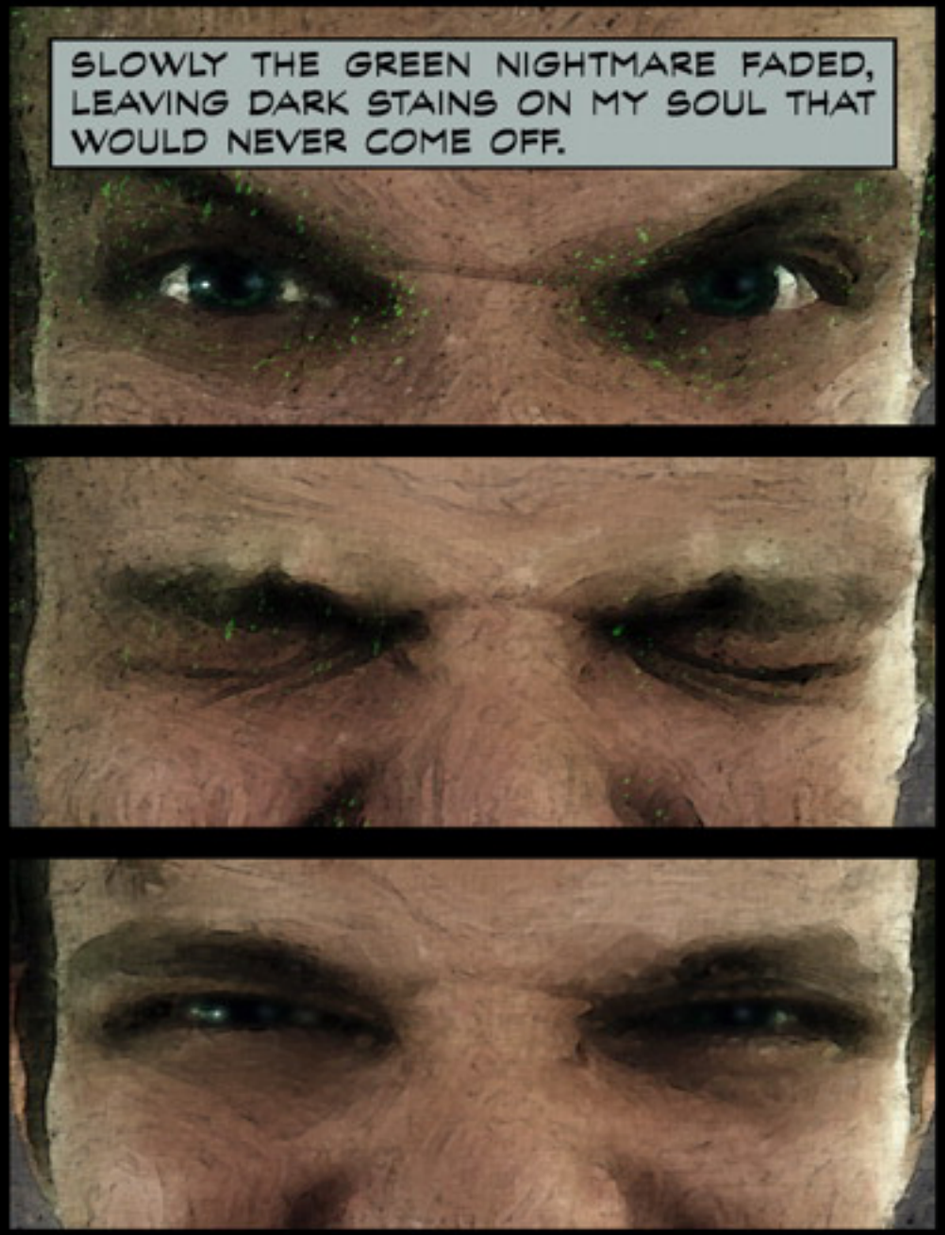
IT WAS A BAD LINE AND A PRANK CALL, SOMEONE SPOUTING INSANE BABBLE.
I COULDN'T MAKE SENSE OF IT.

BUT I HAD AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF DÉJÀ VU. AND THE CALLER'S VOICE SOUNDED ODDLY FAMILIAR.

MAX, SOMETHING HAPPENED AT THE OFFICE TODAY--
A STRANGE MEMO, SOMETHING ABOUT VIKINGS...
HONEY, I'VE GOT TO RUN. YOU CAN TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT THIS EVENING.

HAVE A NICE DAY, DARLING.
THE BULLET HOLES WERE RUBIES ON HER CHEST, BLOOD GLOWING ON HER IVORY SKIN. SHE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL.
THE KILLER WAS SMILING.
THE FLESH OF FALLEN ANGELS.

MAX PAYNE™
PART III: A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN
CHAPTER ONE: TAKE ME TO COLD STEEL


SLOWLY THE GREEN NIGHTMARE FADED, LEAVING DARK STAINS ON MY SOUL THAT WOULD NEVER COME OFF.

I FELT LIKE FLATLINING. I WAS ALL SHOOK UP.
I WOKE UP IN A COLD SWEAT, SICK AND TIRED TO THE BONE, LYING IN A PUDDLE OF MY OWN PUKE.

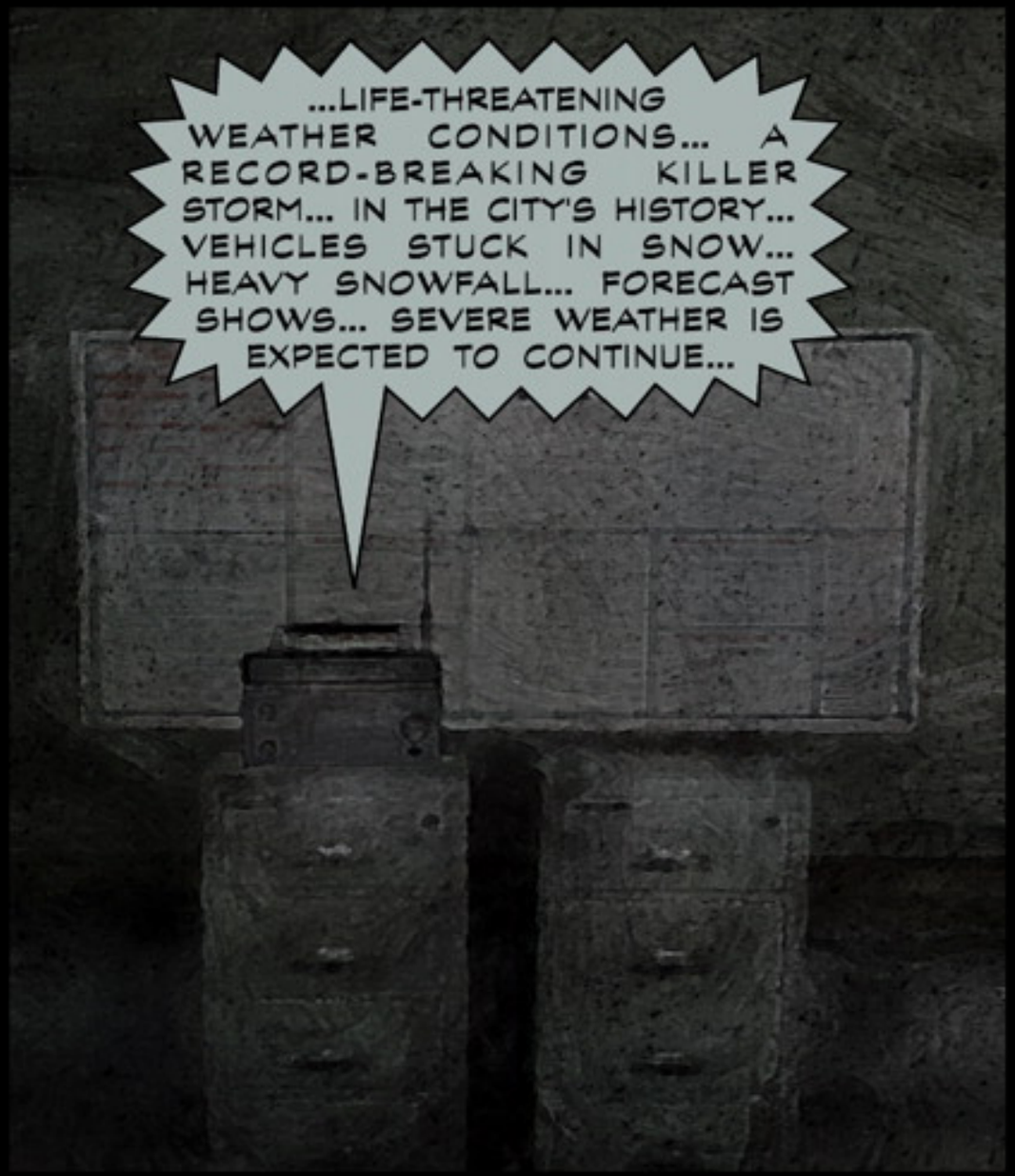
THE HAG HAD SAID "TAKE ME TO COLD STEEL" BEFORE IT HAD ALL GONE CRAZY.
IT WAS A CLUE. THE ONLY ONE I HAD.

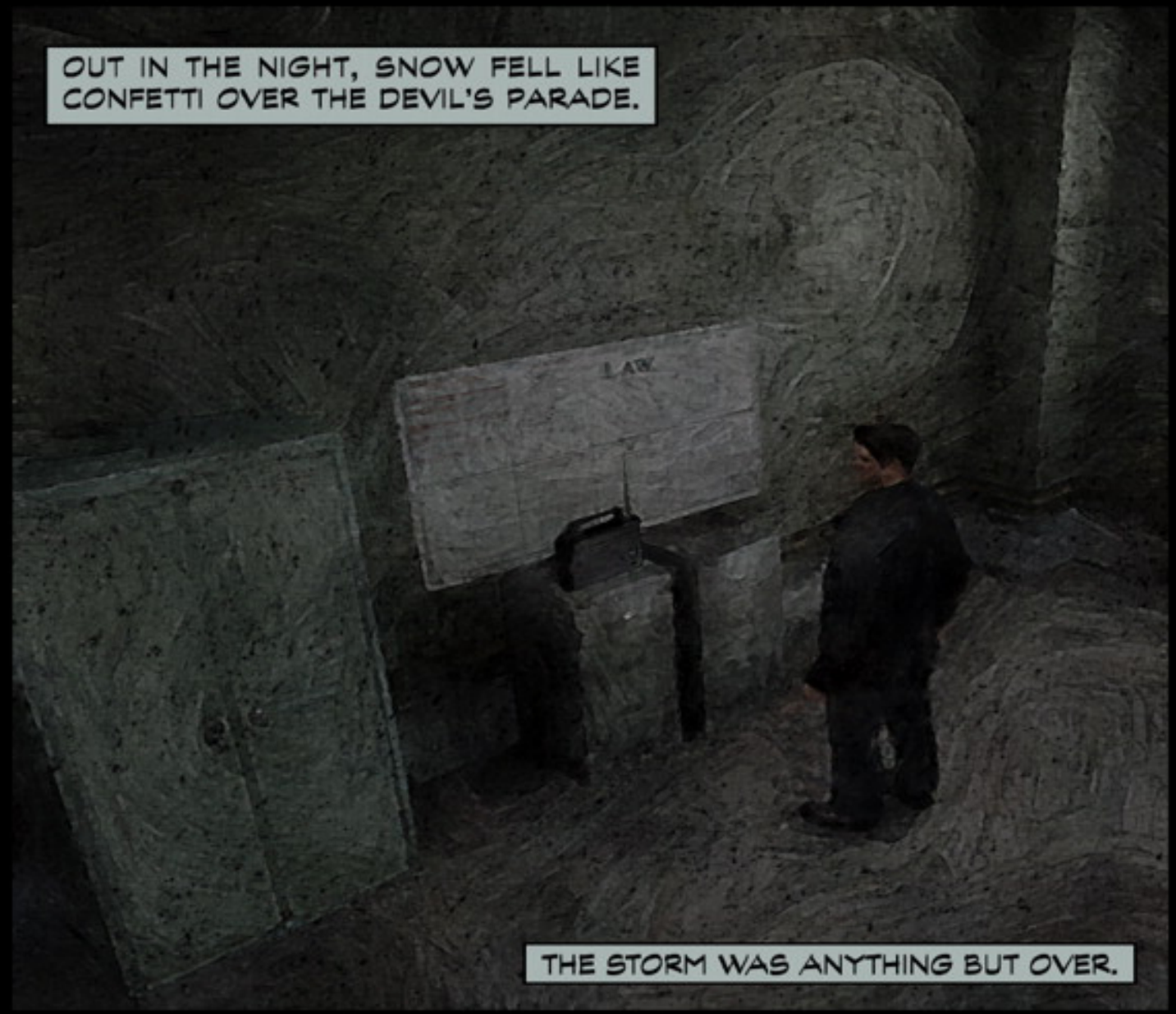
IT TOOK ME FOREVER TO CRAWL BACK TO MY FEET AND HIT THE ROAD, BUT WHEN I DID, I DROVE STRAIGHT TO COLD STEEL FOUNDRY OUTSIDE THE CITY.
THERE WAS A WHOLE LOT OF ACTION AROUND THE PLACE FOR A FREEZING WINTER NIGHT, TRUCKS COMING AND GOING, MEN RUNNING.

I HAD THE DROP ON THE MYSTERY WITCH, SHE THOUGHT I WAS DEAD. I WAS ON HER BLINDSIDE.
I WAS GOING IN.

THE BAD TRIP HAD PUT ME IN A CRAZY MOOD, ADRENALINE PUMPING THROUGH MY ACHING VEINS.
STAGGERING ON THE MILL ROOF IN ICE AND SNOW AND WILD WIND, I WAS A NINJA, MY KUNG FU WAS STRONG.
I WASN'T KIDDING ANYBODY.
AT BEST I WAS SUPERMAN ON KRYPTONITE ABOUT TO FALL THROUGH A SKYLIGHT, DOWN TO WHERE IT WAS ALL GOING DOWN.

A HALF-ABANDONED INDUSTRIAL AREA IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE--
THE FACTORY WAS A PERFECT FRONT FOR ANY NUMBER OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES.
IN THE BELLY OF THE PLANT, MOLTEN METAL BOILED AND BUBBLED, LIKE A WITCH'S BREW.

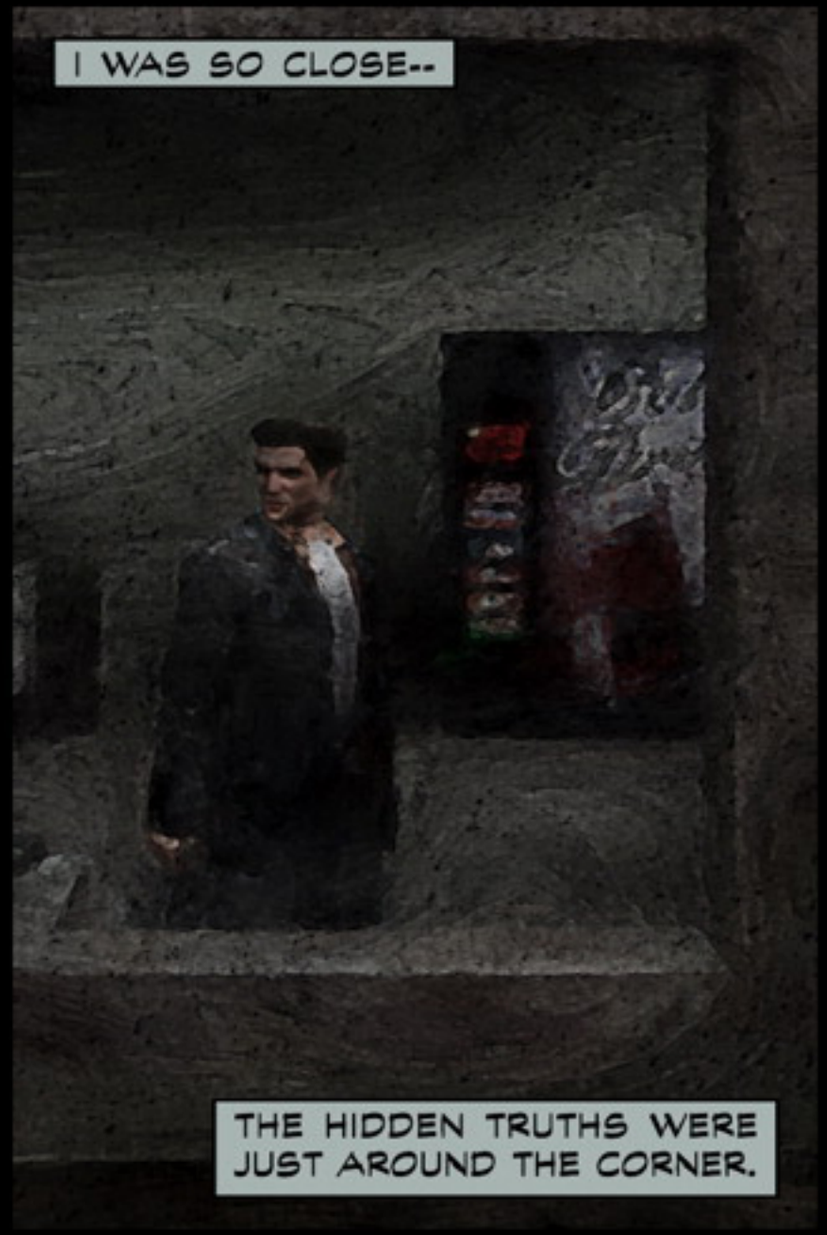

...LIFE-THREATENING WEATHER CONDITIONS... A RECORD-BREAKING KILLER STORM... IN THE CITY'S HISTORY... VEHICLES STUCK IN SNOW... HEAVY SNOWFALL... FORECAST SHOWS... SEVERE WEATHER IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE...

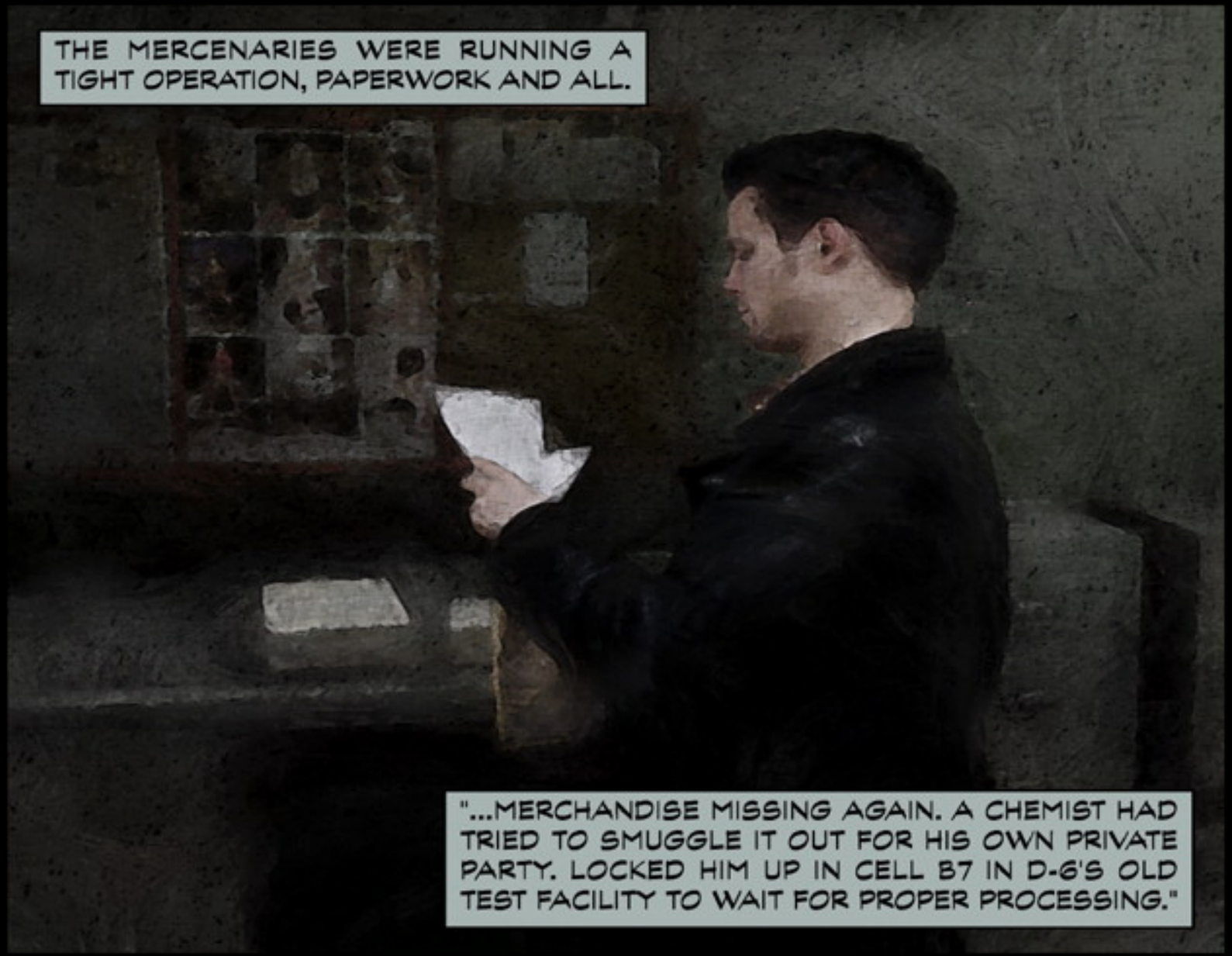

OUT IN THE NIGHT, SNOW FELL LIKE CONFETTI OVER THE DEVIL'S PARADE.
LAW
THE STORM WAS ANYTHING BUT OVER.

MAX PAYNE™
PART III: A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN
CHAPTER TWO: HIDDEN TRUTHS

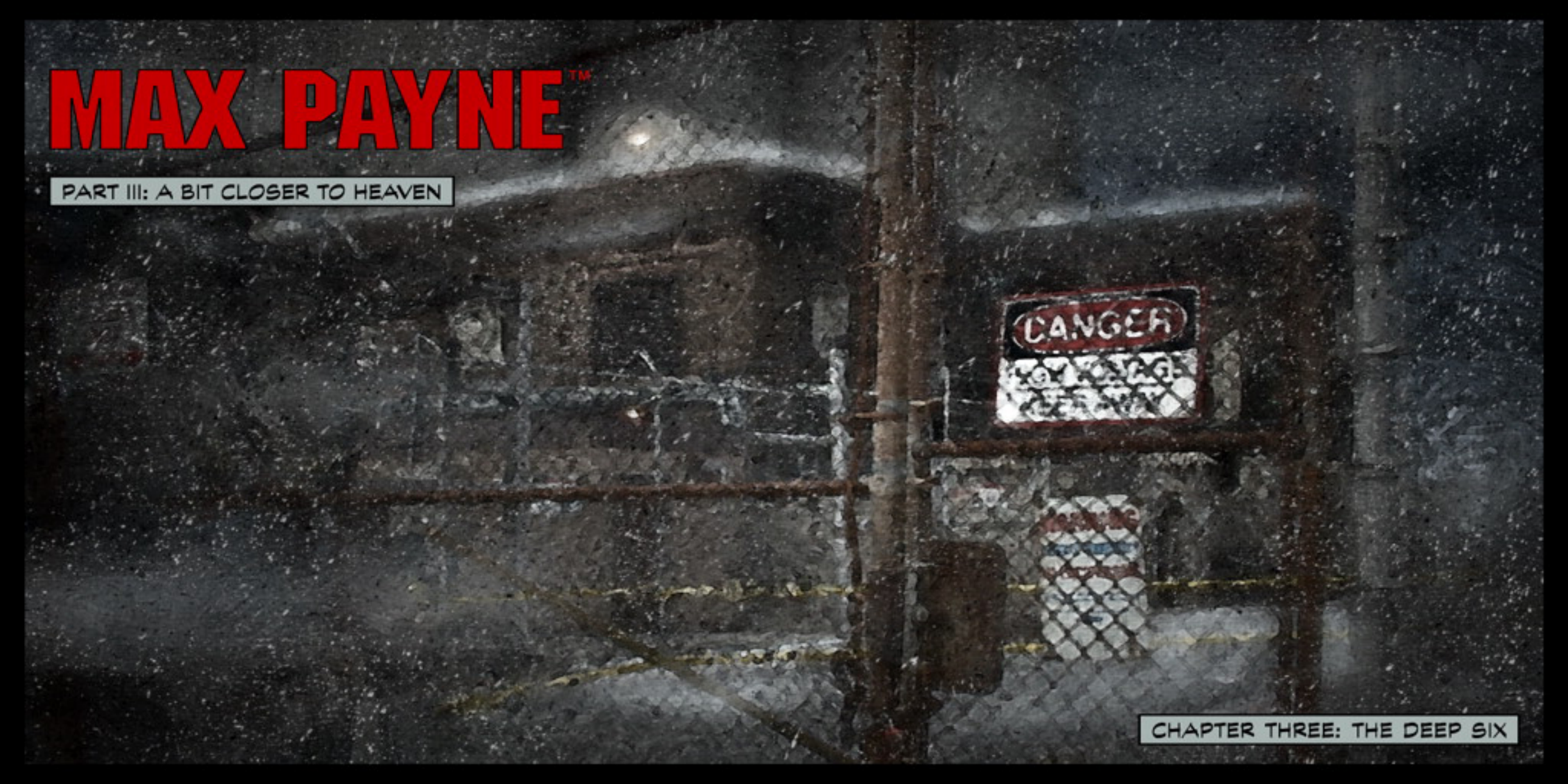
...PERIMETER BREACHED. THE FACILITY HAS BEEN COMPROMISED, REPEAT, THE DEEP SIX HAS BEEN COMPROMISED...
...INITIATE OPERATION DEAD EYES...

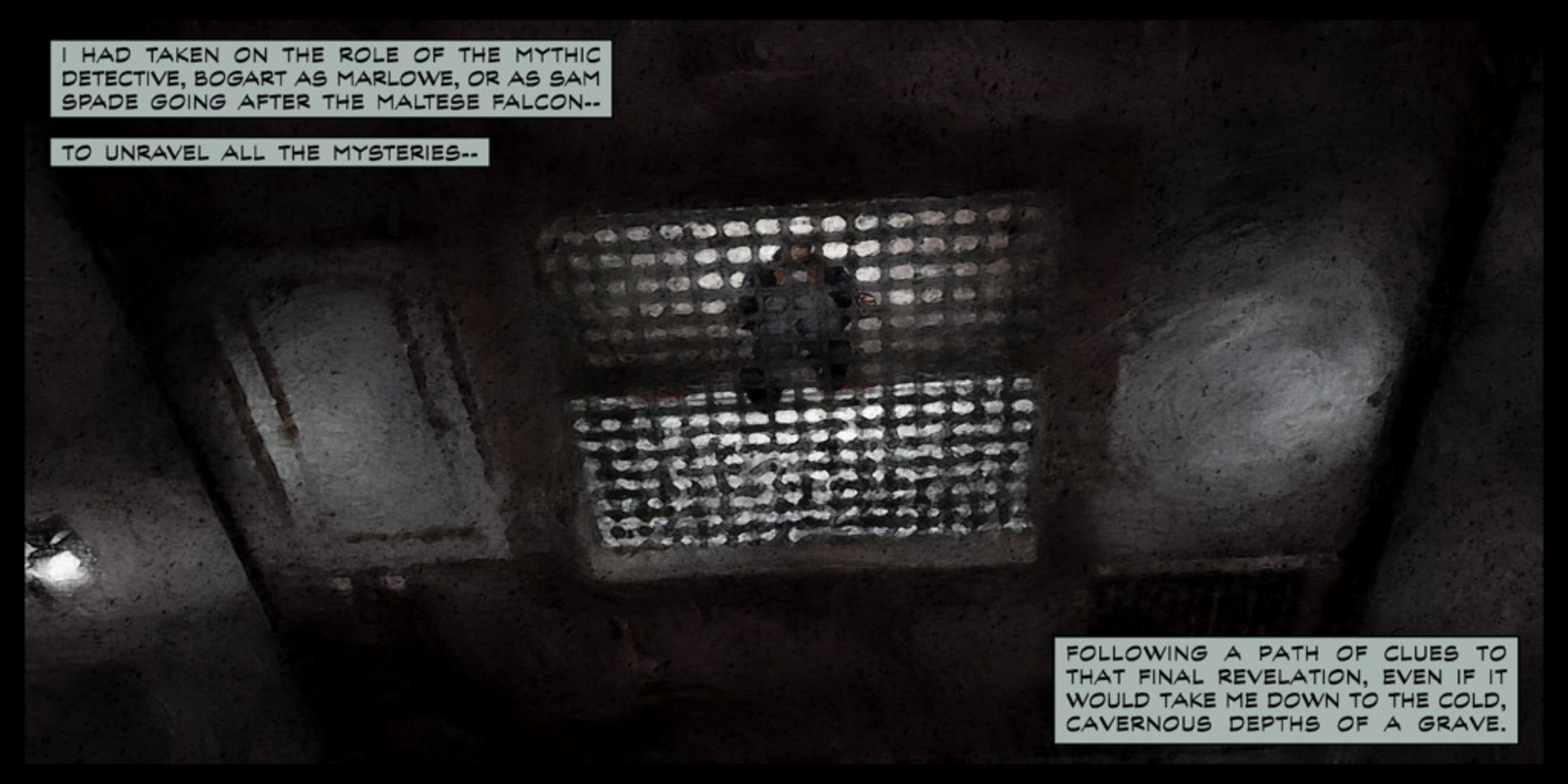
THE WALKY-TALKY MILITARY LINGO COULD MEAN ONLY ONE THING--
THEY WERE GETTING READY TO DESTROY THE EVIDENCE AND VANISH INTO THE NIGHT.


I WAS SO CLOSE--
THE HIDDEN TRUTHS WERE JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

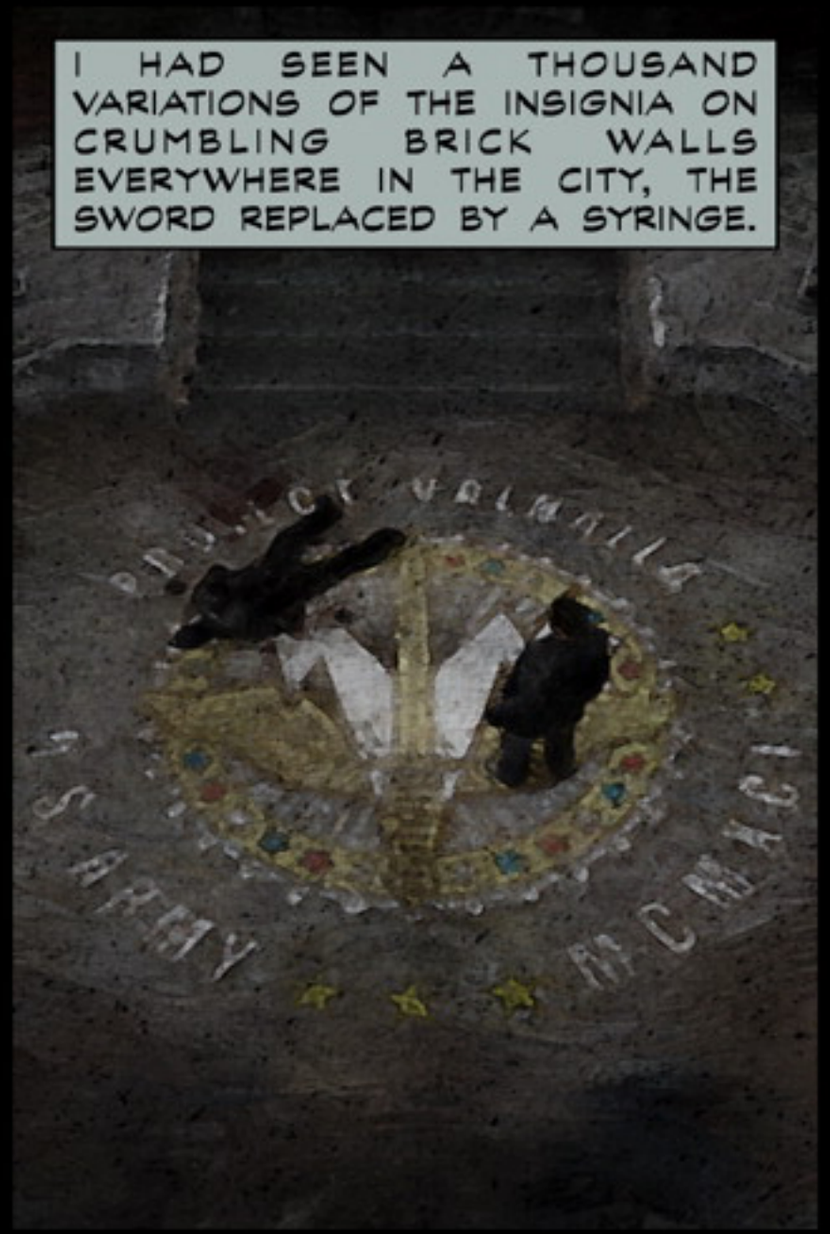

THE MERCENARIES WERE RUNNING A TIGHT OPERATION, PAPERWORK AND ALL.
"...MERCHANDISE MISSING AGAIN. A CHEMIST HAD TRIED TO SMUGGLE IT OUT FOR HIS OWN PRIVATE PARTY. LOCKED HIM UP IN CELL B7 IN D-6'S OLD TEST FACILITY TO WAIT FOR PROPER PROCESSING."

I WAS CLOSE ENOUGH TO HEAR THE SECRETS JUST BEYOND THE NEXT DOORWAY.


MAX PAYNE™
PART III: A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN
DANGER
CHAPTER THREE: THE DEEP SIX


I HAD TAKEN ON THE ROLE OF THE MYTHIC DETECTIVE, BOGART AS MARLOWE, OR AS SAM SPADE GOING AFTER THE MALTESE FALCON--
TO UNRAVEL ALL THE MYSTERIES--
FOLLOWING A PATH OF CLUES TO THAT FINAL REVELATION, EVEN IF IT WOULD TAKE ME DOWN TO THE COLD, CAVERNOUS DEPTHS OF A GRAVE.

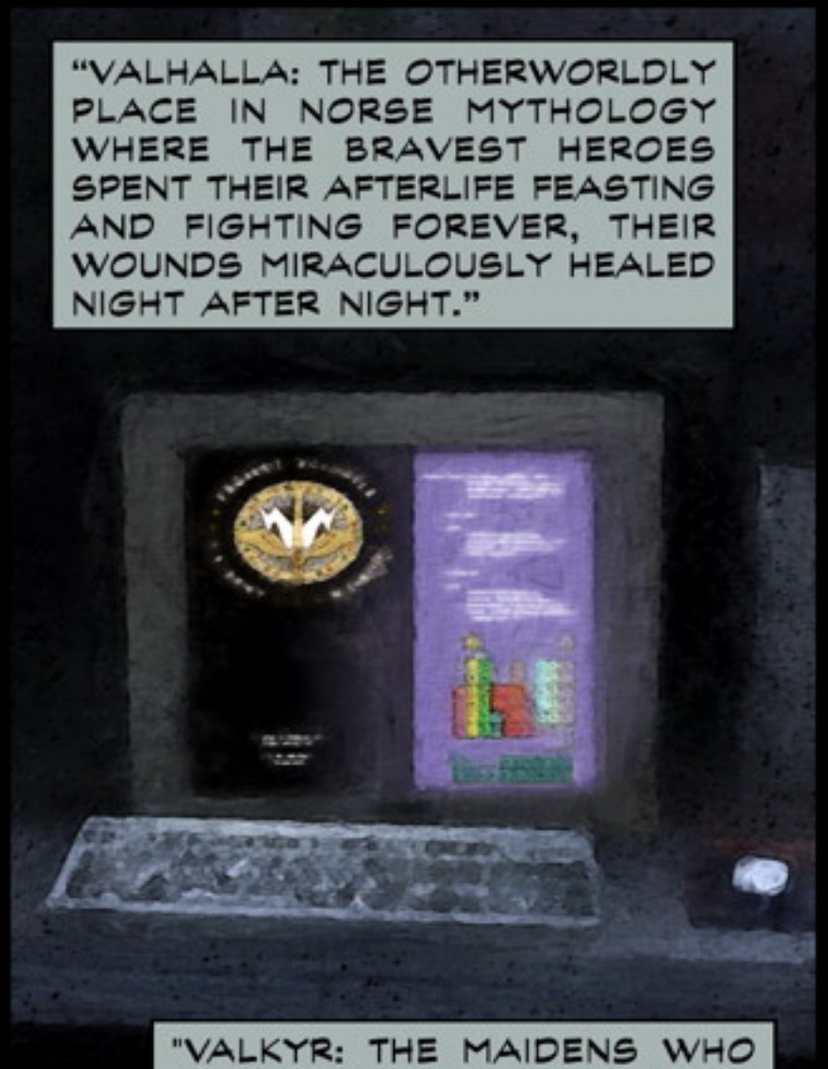
THERE WAS A OLD ARMY BUNKER UNDER THE STEEL MILL.
I KNEW THE MILITARY PLAQUE ON THE FLOOR.


I HAD SEEN A THOUSAND VARIATIONS OF THE INSIGNIA ON CRUMBLING BRICK WALLS EVERYWHERE IN THE CITY, THE SWORD REPLACED BY A SYRINGE.

PROJECT VALHALLA.
V FOR VALKYR. V FOR VALHALLA.
ALL OF A SUDDEN IT READ LIKE A CRACKPOT CONSPIRACY THEORY.

"TOP SECRET. PROJECT VALHALLA. U.S. ARMY. YGGDRASIL NETWORK."

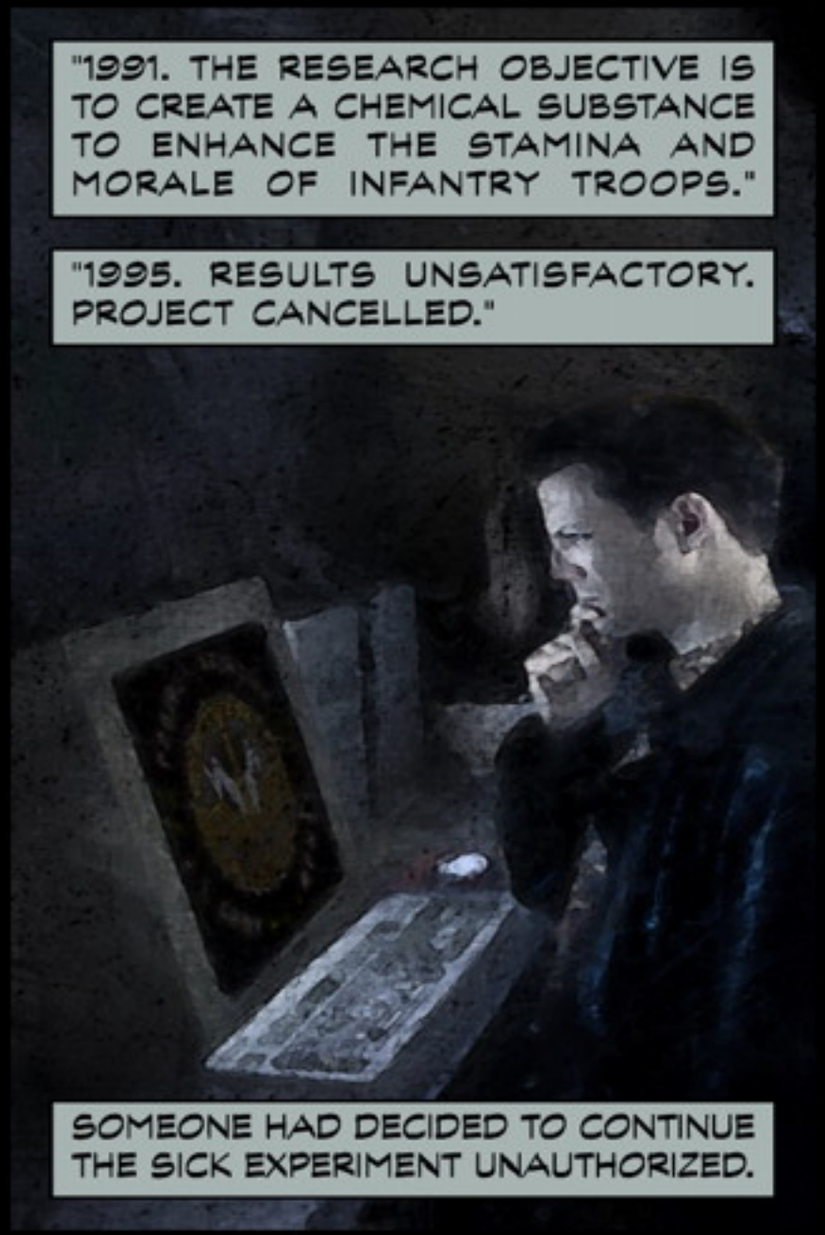
"VALHALLA: THE OTHERWORLDLY PLACE IN NORSE MYTHOLOGY WHERE THE BRAVEST HEROES SPENT THEIR AFTERLIFE FEASTING AND FIGHTING FOREVER, THEIR WOUNDS MIRACULOUSLY HEALED NIGHT AFTER NIGHT."



"VALKYR: THE MAIDENS WHO CHOSE THE MOST COURAGEOUS VIKING WARRIORS AND CARRIED THEM TO VALHALLA."

"1991. THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVE IS TO CREATE A CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE TO ENHANCE THE STAMINA AND MORALE OF INFANTRY TROOPS."

"1995. RESULTS UNSATISFACTORY. PROJECT CANCELLED."



SOMEONE HAD DECIDED TO CONTINUE THE SICK EXPERIMENT UNAUTHORIZED.

"...PROJECT COMPROMISED. DATA LEAK. FIX THE DAMAGE BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY."

"SECURITY CLEARANCE RED, AUTHORIZED BY THE PROJECT LEAD. FIELD-TEST, DOUBLE THE DOSAGE FOR ALL THE REMAINING TEST-SUBJECTS, OBSERVE AND RECORD THE SUBJECTS' BEHAVIOR IN AN URBAN SETTING."

THE DROP-OFF POINT WAS MY OLD ADDRESS IN NEW JERSEY, THE FILE DATED THREE YEARS AGO.

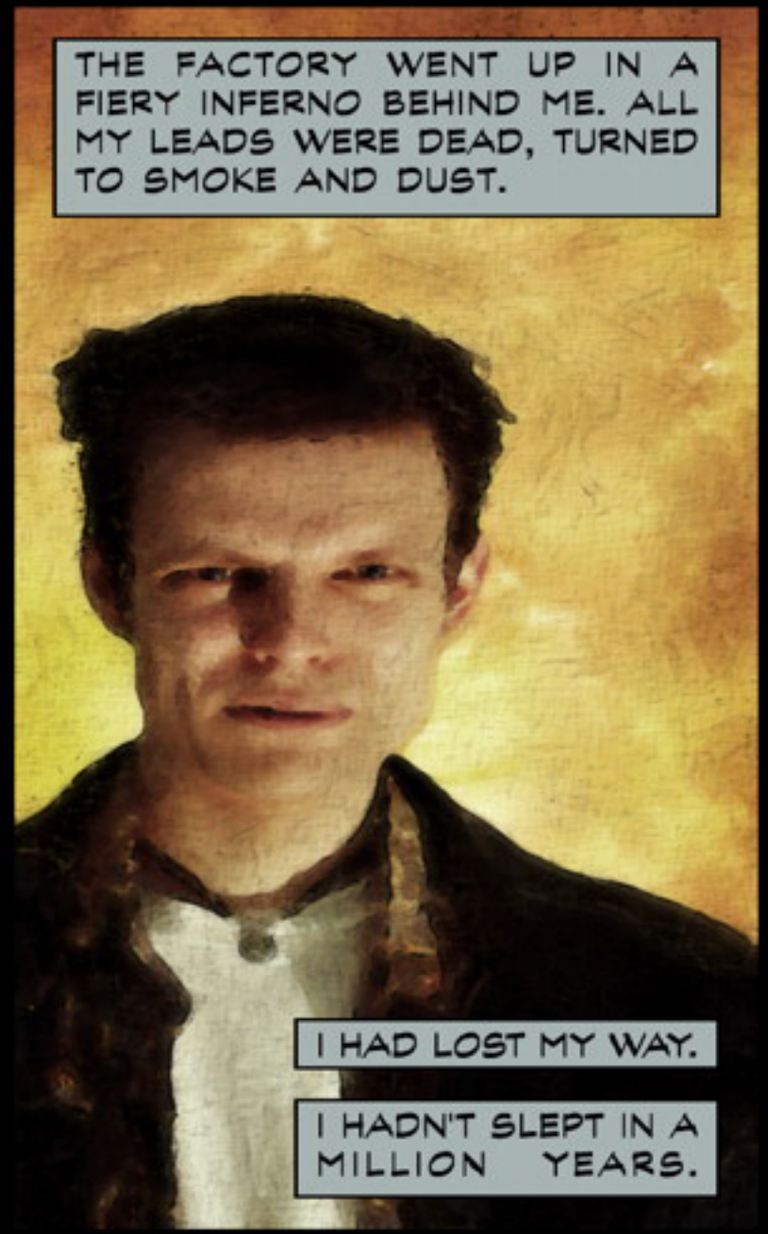
JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD REACHED THE DEEPEST DEPTHS OF HORROR, IT SUDDENLY GOT WORSE.

HOW TO TURN OFF THAT SMALL VOICE INSIDE YOUR HEAD THAT STARTED TO WHISPER THAT YOU SHOULD BE GLAD--

THAT NOW, IF NOT BEFORE, YOUR REVENGE WAS JUSTIFIABLE ON ANY CONCEIVABLE MORAL SCALE?

THAT SMALL VOICE PROVED, BEYOND ANY DOUBT, THAT I WAS DAMNED.

YOU PIECE TOGETHER A JIGSAW AND THE FINAL PICTURE IS YOU FINISHING THAT SAME PUZZLE. A MAD, GREEN-EYED KILLER STANDING BEHIND YOU.
AN URBAN LEGEND COME TRUE.
THE PROJECT VALHALLA TEST-SUBJECTS HAD BEEN THE MAD JUNKIES WHO HAD MURDERED MY LOVED ONES.
THE REST WAS SIMPLE BODYCOUNT MATH. IT ALL POINTED TO HER--
MS. VALKYR.


THE FACTORY WENT UP IN A FIERY INFERNO BEHIND ME. ALL MY LEADS WERE DEAD, TURNED TO SMOKE AND DUST.
I HAD LOST MY WAY.
I HADN'T SLEPT IN A MILLION YEARS.

MAX PAYNE™
PART III: A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN
CHAPTER FOUR: BACKSTABBING BASTARD

I FELT THIN AS DEATH.

I'D BEEN LIVING ON AN ENDLESS SUPPLY OF WEEK-OLD DOUGHNUTS. THEY WERE FUEL FOR THIS CRAZY FURNACE INSIDE MY HEAD.

I COULDN'T REMEMBER WHEN I HAD LAST SEEN THE SUN. I WAS ON A PERMANENT GRAVEYARD SHIFT.

WHEN THE DARKNESS FELL, NEW YORK CITY BECAME SOMETHING ELSE, ANY OLD SINATRA SONG NOTWITHSTANDING.

BAD THINGS HAPPENED IN THE NIGHT, ON THE STREETS OF THAT OTHER CITY, NOIR YORK CITY.

I WAS IN AN ALL-NIGHT DINER DOWNING CUP AFTER CUP OF COFFEE THAT TASTED LIKE ENGINE OIL, WHEN A NEW MESSAGE FROM B.B. GOT ME BACK ON THE KILLER TRACK.
EAT
WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED AT ROSCOE STREET? MAXEY, I'M GOING OUT ON A LIMB HERE. WE NEED TO TALK THIS THROUGH, COME UP WITH A PLAN. 2:30 AM. THE CHOIR COMMUNICATIONS' GARAGE.

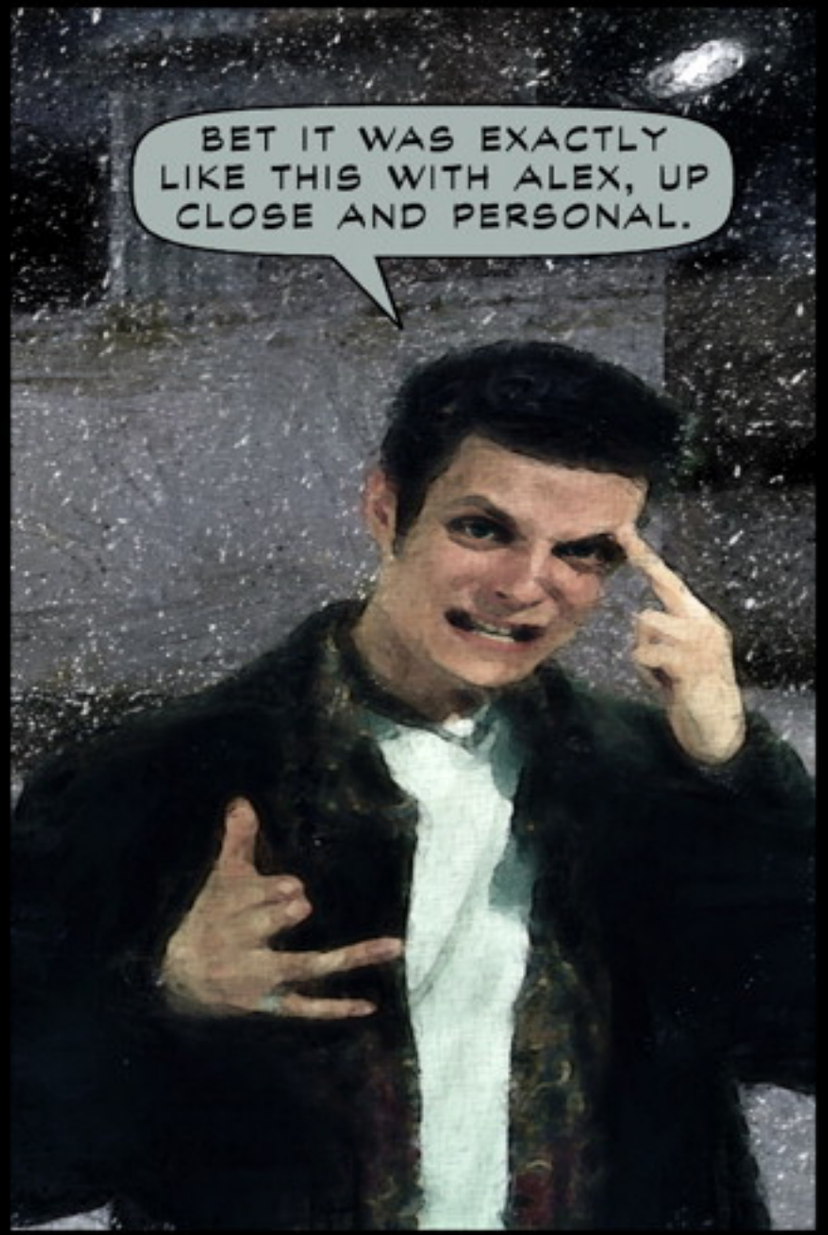
THE MORE I THOUGHT ABOUT ALEX'S MURDER AND THE FRAME-UP, THE MORE IT FELT LIKE AN INSIDE JOB.
I SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT COMING. B.B. HAD SOLD ME OUT, AND NOW HE WANTED TO FINISH WHAT HE'D STARTED.

THE GARAGE WAS DEAD.
B.B. SHOWED UP IN HIS TAILOR-MADE SUIT, GOLD WATCH AND CUFFLINKS TO MATCH. ALL WAY BEYOND A COP'S PAY.
MAXEY.
OOZING SUAVE CHARM, HE WAS GUILTY AS HELL.

WHAT THE HELL DOES B.B. STAND FOR ANYWAY? BACKSTABBING BASTARD.
COME ON. DON'T BE LIKE THAT, HAVE A CIGAR.
I DON'T SMOKE.

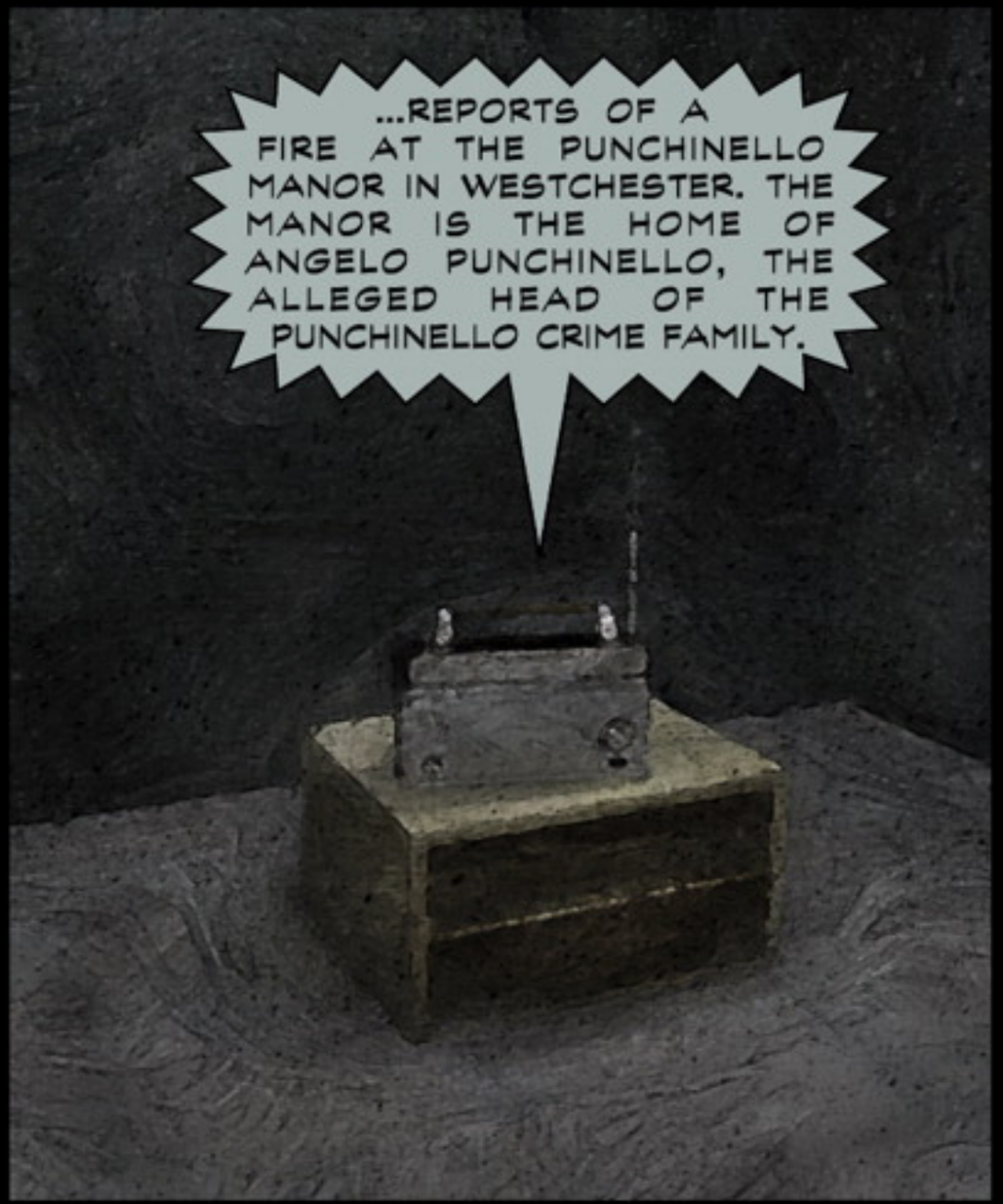
MAXEY, YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW BIG THIS IS. IT'S HUGE. YOU HAVE NO IDEA --

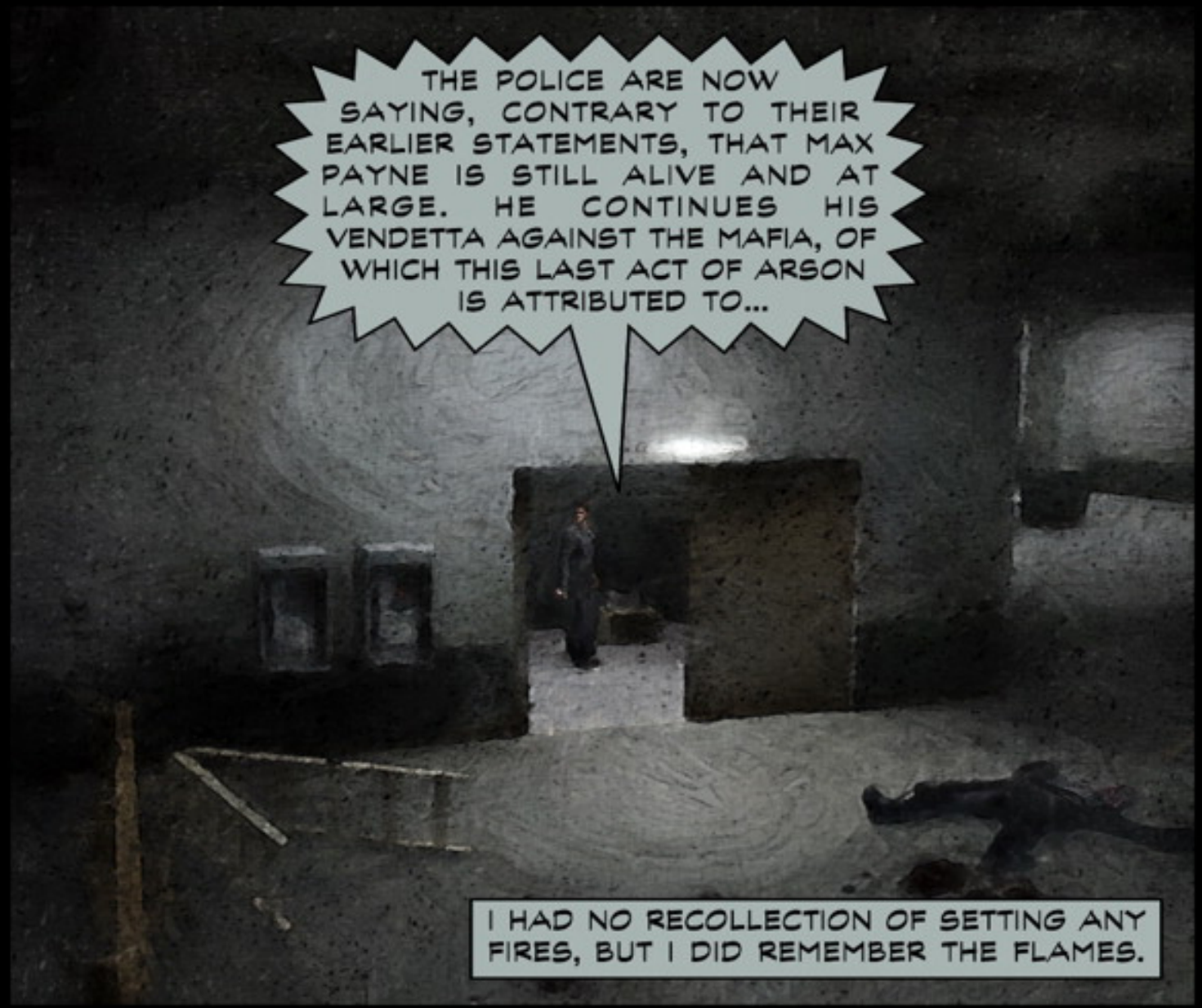
I THINK I DO. YOU'RE A BRIBE-TAKING BENT COP WHO SOLD OUT HIS PARTNER. THOSE MOBSTERS IN THE SUBWAY WERE A DEAD GIVEAWAY, HARD TO MISS.


BET IT WAS EXACTLY LIKE THIS WITH ALEX, UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL.

YOU CAN'T WIN THIS ONE, MAX.
NO, BUT I CAN MAKE DAMN SURE NONE OF YOU DO, EITHER.

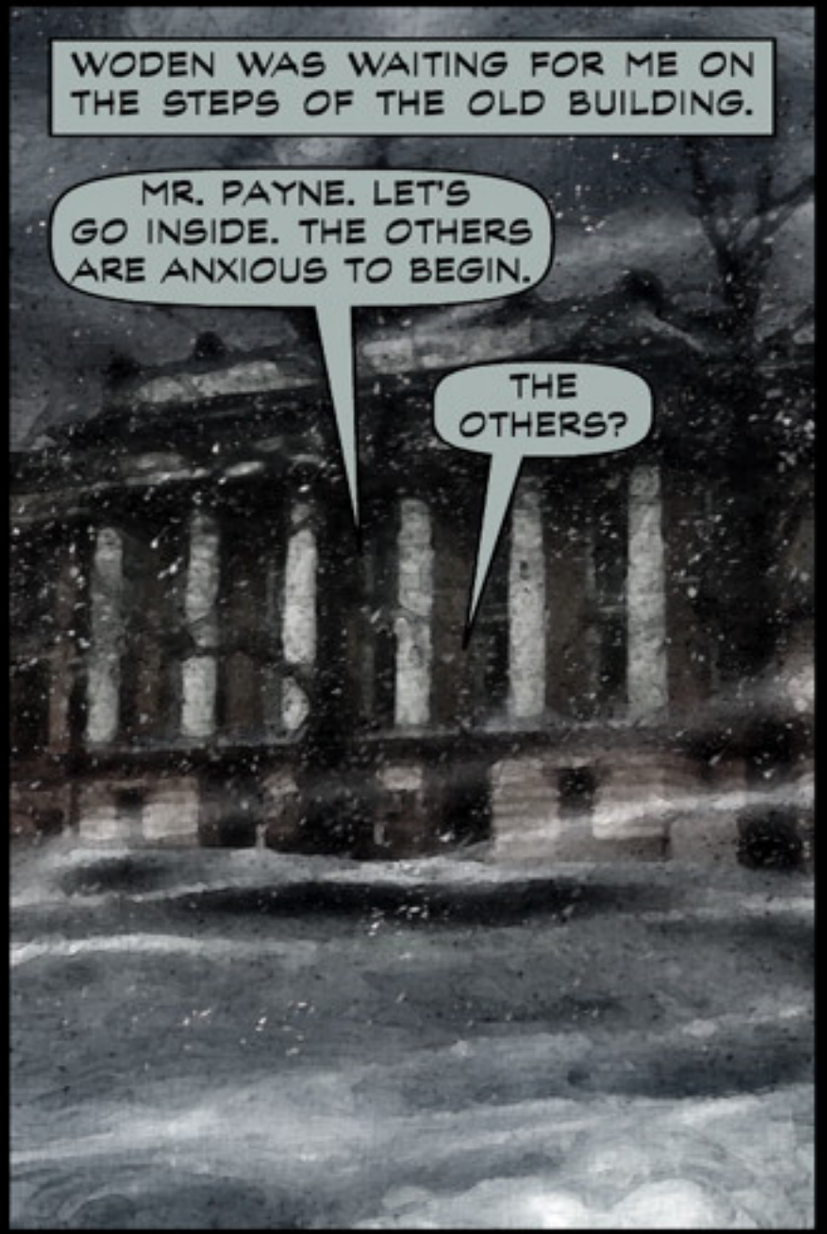
B.B. TURNED OUT TO BE ANOTHER CARDBOARD CUTOUT BAD GUY--
A BAD COP ON THE TAKE, A COWARDLY RIGHT-HAND MAN FLEEING FROM THE SCENE, LEAVING HIS PAID THUGS TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK.


...REPORTS OF A FIRE AT THE PUNCHINELLO MANOR IN WESTCHESTER. THE MANOR IS THE HOME OF ANGELO PUNCHINELLO, THE ALLEGED HEAD OF THE PUNCHINELLO CRIME FAMILY.


THE POLICE ARE NOW SAYING, CONTRARY TO THEIR EARLIER STATEMENTS, THAT MAX PAYNE IS STILL ALIVE AND AT LARGE. HE CONTINUES HIS VENDETTA AGAINST THE MAFIA, OF WHICH THIS LAST ACT OF ARSON IS ATTRIBUTED TO...
I HAD NO RECOLLECTION OF SETTING ANY FIRES, BUT I DID REMEMBER THE FLAMES.

YEAH?
MAX PAYNE?
WHATEVER DOES IT FOR YOU.
THIS IS ALFRED WODEN. I CAN GIVE YOU THE NAME OF YOUR ENEMY. COME TO THE ASGARD BUILDING PRESENTLY. WE ARE EXPECTING YOU.
KLIK!

MAX PAYNE™
PART III: A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN
CHAPTER FIVE: IN THE LAND OF THE BLIND


WODEN WAS WAITING FOR ME ON THE STEPS OF THE OLD BUILDING.
MR. PAYNE. LET'S GO INSIDE. THE OTHERS ARE ANXIOUS TO BEGIN.
THE OTHERS?

DESPITE THE GENERAL MISCONCEPTION, THIS BUILDING ACTUALLY PREDATES THE CITY HALL BY TWO YEARS, THUS BEING THE OLDEST MUNICIPAL BUILDING STILL IN USE HERE AT THE FOOT OF THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE.
NO KIDDING.

THE OLD MAN PLAYED TOUR GUIDE AS HE LED ME THROUGH A DARK, DOMED HALL.
THE ANSWERS I WAS AFTER LOOMED LARGE AHEAD.

MR. PAYNE, I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MY COLLEAGUES IN WHAT WE CALL THE INNER CIRCLE.

YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING TOO MUCH X-FILES.
YOU HAVE SEEN THE FILES ON PROJECT VALHALLA. WE CAN FILL THE GAPS, PROVIDE YOU WITH THE INFORMATION MISSING FROM THOSE FILES. WE WERE ALL INVOLVED IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE PROJECT DURING THE GULF WAR.
WHAT'S THE CATCH?

WE WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO BLOW THIS THING WIDE OPEN--
BUT OUR HANDS ARE TIED.

"HER NAME IS NICOLE HORNE. SHE WAS THE KEY FIGURE IN PROJECT VALHALLA."
"WHEN THE FUNDING WAS DISCONTINUED, SHE SIMPLY REFUSED TO QUIT. SHE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT SHE HAD IN HER HANDS."
"NICOLE HORNE IS THE PRESIDENT OF AESIR CORPORATION. SHE HAS MORE THAN HALF THE CITY IN HER POCKET."

THIS MUST BE KEPT UNDER WRAPS. IF YOU TRY TO GO PUBLIC WITH THIS, WE WILL DENY ANY KNOWLEDGE.
WE NEED YOU TO TAKE HER OUT.
AFTERWARDS WE CAN PROTECT YOU, MAKE ALL THE CHARGES GO AWAY --

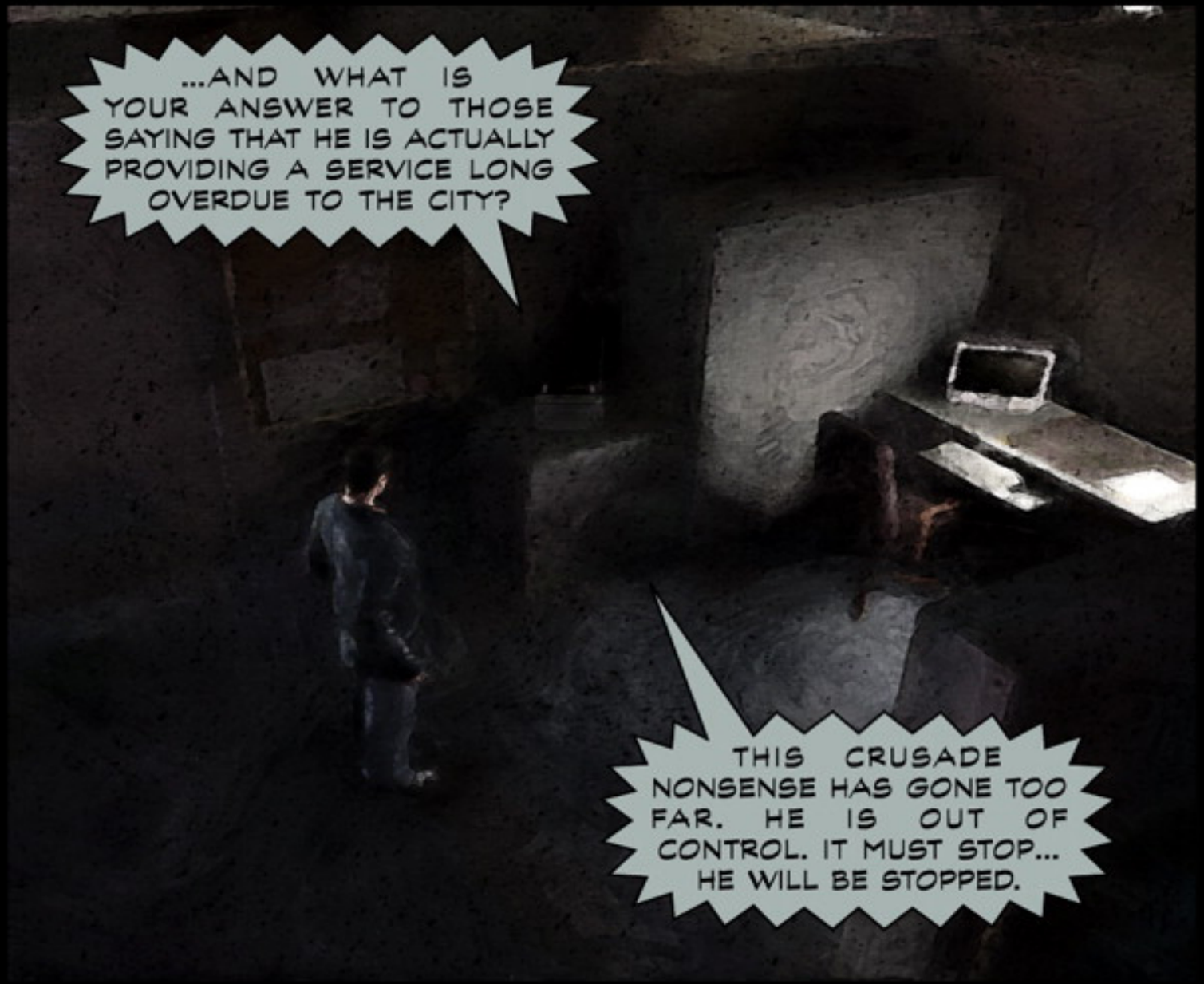
THAT WAS THE CUE FOR THE KILLER SUITS TO KICK IN THE DOORS AND SWARM INSIDE.
IT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE FLOOR SHOW, BUT I DECIDED TO LEAVE EARLY ANYWAY.
IT WAS ONLY A ONE STORY FALL--
LUCKY ME.

ON SCREEN THE SO-CALLED CORPSE OF ALFRED WODEN STOOD UP, MIRACULOUSLY WAKING FROM HIS DIRT NAP, LOOKING SMUG AMONG HIS DEAD PALS.

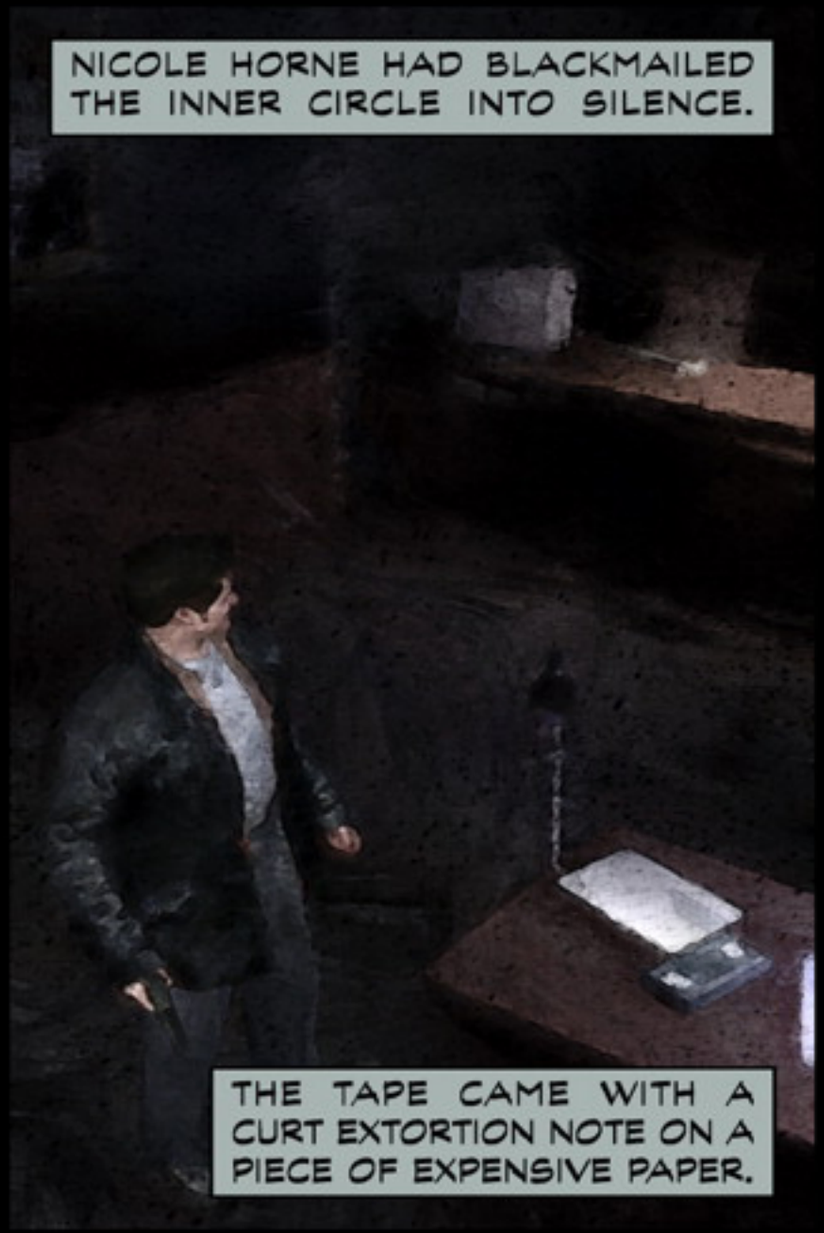
IN THE LAND OF THE BLIND THE ONE-EYED MAN IS KING.

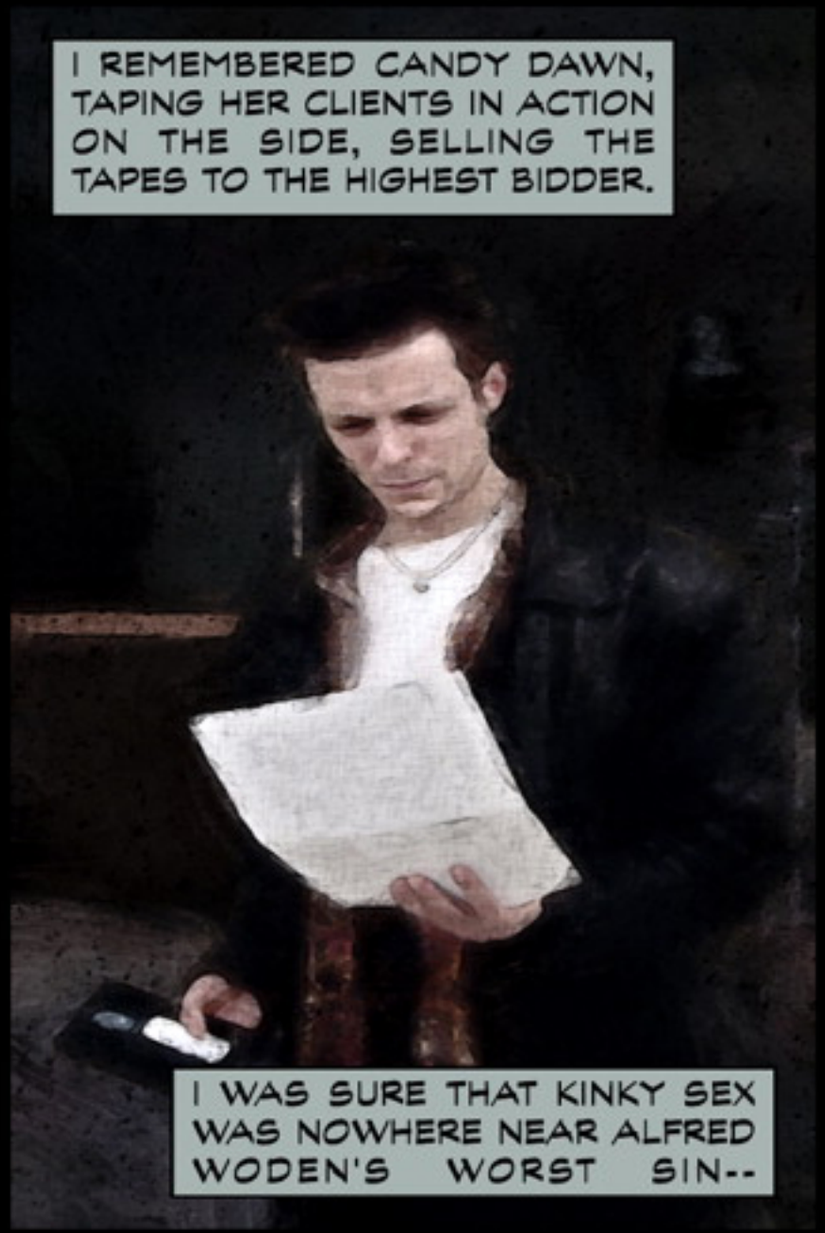
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW HE'D PULLED IT OFF, BUT IT WAS A PRETTY SLICK WAY TO GET OUT OF ALL HIS PROMISES.

MOST OF WHAT HE HAD SAID FIT TOO WELL TO BE A LOAD OF CRAP.


...AND WHAT IS YOUR ANSWER TO THOSE SAYING THAT HE IS ACTUALLY PROVIDING A SERVICE LONG OVERDUE TO THE CITY?
THIS CRUSADE NONSENSE HAS GONE TOO FAR. HE IS OUT OF CONTROL. IT MUST STOP... HE WILL BE STOPPED.

THAT WAS DEPUTY CHIEF JIM BRAVURA FROM THE NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT...


NICOLE HORNE HAD BLACKMAILED THE INNER CIRCLE INTO SILENCE.
THE TAPE CAME WITH A CURT EXTORTION NOTE ON A PIECE OF EXPENSIVE PAPER.


I REMEMBERED CANDY DAWN, TAPING HER CLIENTS IN ACTION ON THE SIDE, SELLING THE TAPES TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.
I WAS SURE THAT KINKY SEX WAS NOWHERE NEAR ALFRED WODEN'S WORST SIN--

BUT I HAD A FEELING THAT, WHEN THIS WAS OVER, ANY COLLATERAL WOULD COME IN HANDY.

...NOTHING SEEMS TO STOP AESIR CORPORATION'S PHENOMENAL VICTORY MARCH. INCREDIBLY, THE STOCKS ARE STILL ROCKETING.
AESIR
A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN

AESIR
WORRIED EXPERTS ALREADY SEE A DANGER IN THE COMPANY'S SUCCESS. SOME HAVE GONE AS FAR AS TO SAY THAT AESIR CORPORATION IS ABOUT TO BECOME AN EVEN BIGGER MONOPOLY THAN... EVER WAS...

WODEN HAD TAKEN CARE OF MY MISSION PREPS WITH MILITARY PRECISION. THE CRITICAL AREAS IN THE AESIR CORPORATION HQ BLUEPRINTS WERE CIRCLED IN RED.

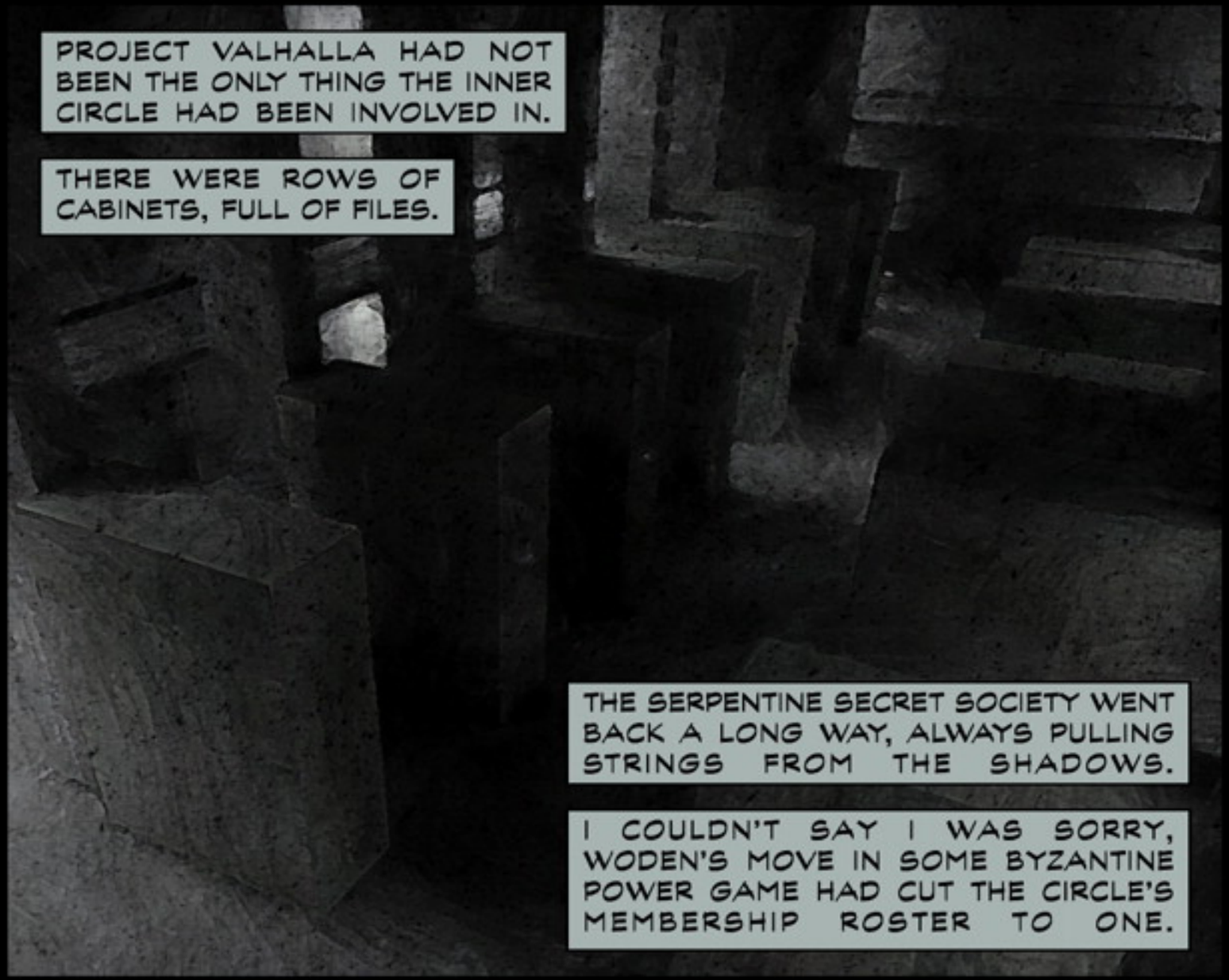
THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE WAS AT THE TOP OF THE BUILDING, RIGHT BELOW HER PENTHOUSE SUITE.

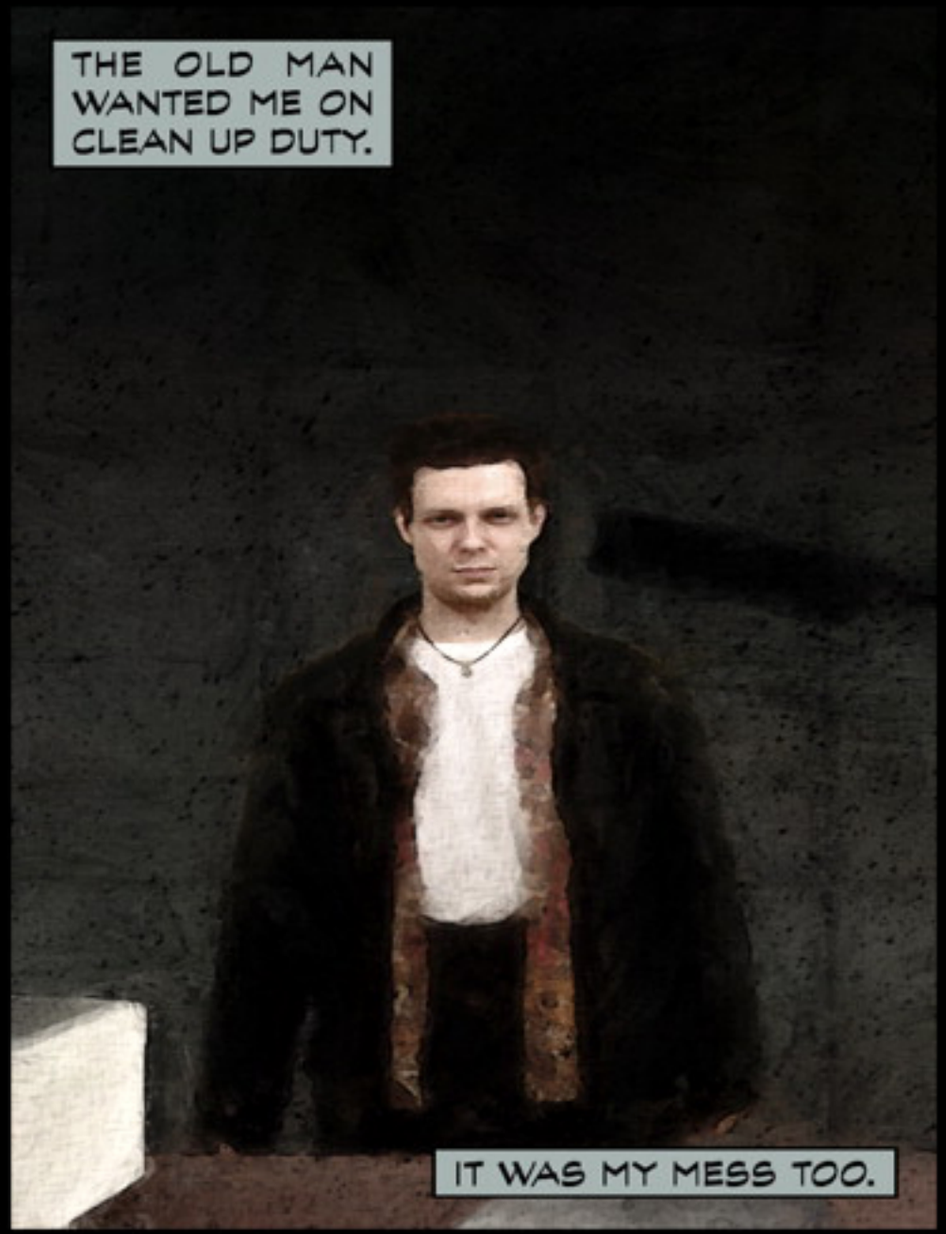
THE ELEVATORS WERE CONTROLLED BY A SECURITY COMPUTER, PART OF THE MAIN FRAME LOCATED UNDERGROUND BELOW THE BUILDING.

THE HIGH-RISE WAS SEALED AS TIGHT AS A SCI-FI FORTRESS.

MAX PAYNE™
PART III: A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN
CHAPTER SIX: BYZANTINE POWER GAME

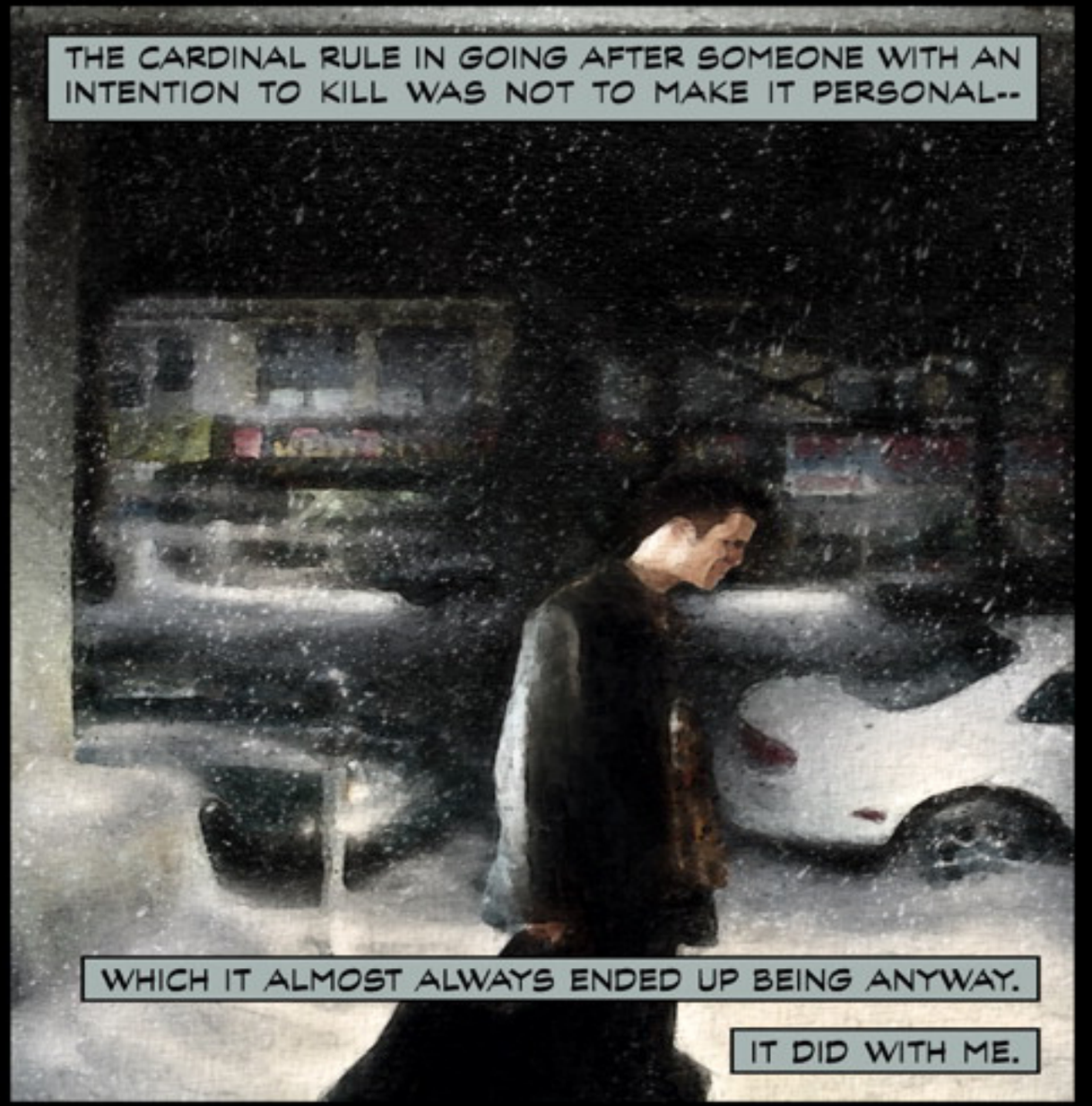
I HAD DREAMED OF REVENGE.
THOSE DREAMS WERE ALWAYS NIGHTMARES, OF COMING CLOSE AND THEN FAILING.
NOW I WAS CLOSE. I HAD A NAME TO GUIDE ME. NICOLE HORNE.
I HAD NOTHING TO LOSE.


PROJECT VALHALLA HAD NOT BEEN THE ONLY THING THE INNER CIRCLE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN.
THERE WERE ROWS OF CABINETS, FULL OF FILES.
THE SERPENTINE SECRET SOCIETY WENT BACK A LONG WAY, ALWAYS PULLING STRINGS FROM THE SHADOWS.
I COULDN'T SAY I WAS SORRY, WODEN'S MOVE IN SOME BYZANTINE POWER GAME HAD CUT THE CIRCLE'S MEMBERSHIP ROSTER TO ONE.

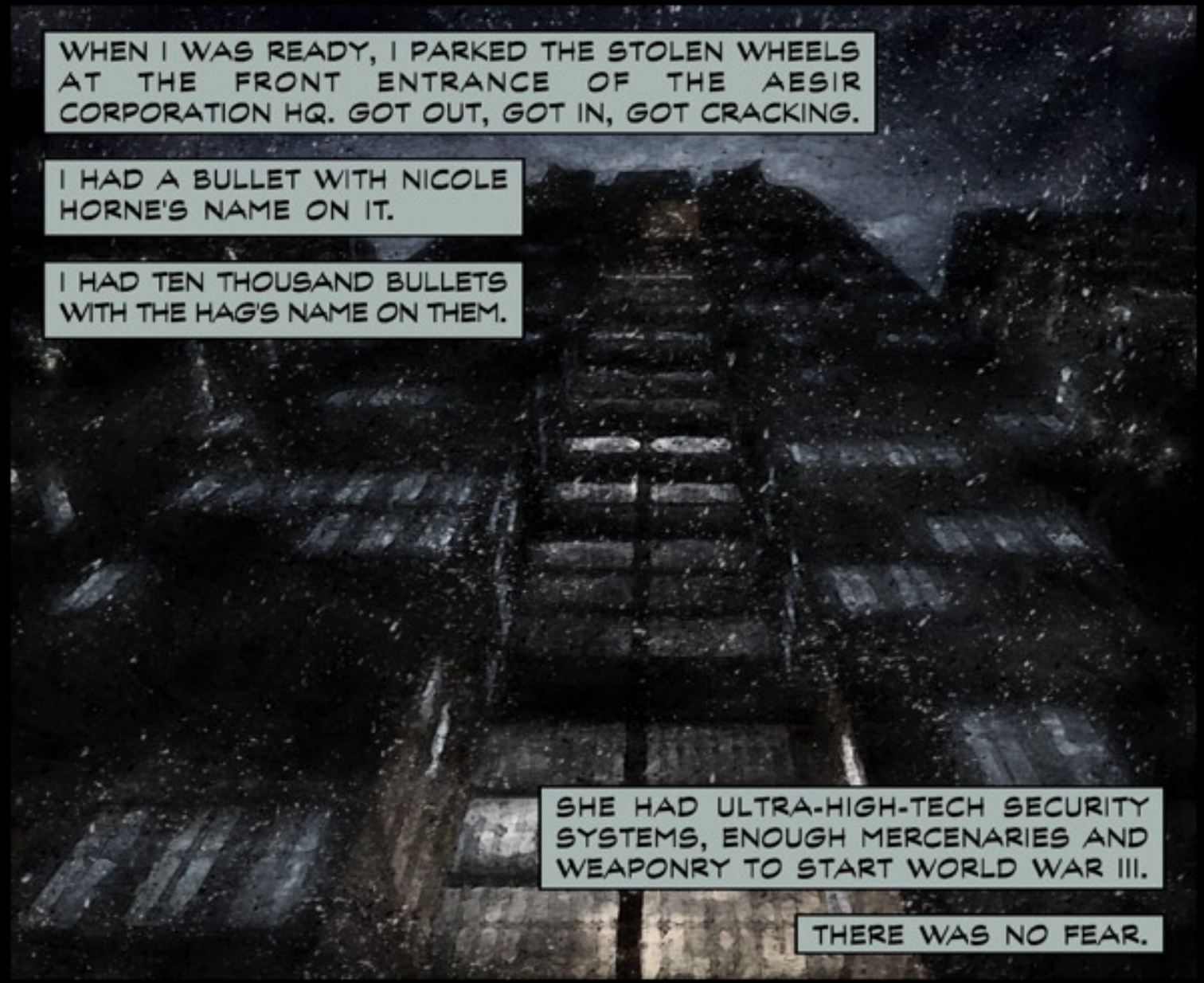

THE OLD MAN WANTED ME ON CLEAN UP DUTY.
IT WAS MY MESS TOO.

MAX PAYNE™
PART III: A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN
CHAPTER SEVEN: NOTHING TO LOSE

MINE WASN'T THE MOST ORIGINAL APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM. IT WASN'T AS IF IT HADN'T ALL BEEN DONE BEFORE--
AN EYE FOR AN EYE, THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF REVENGE, OLD AS DIRT, STILL GOING STRONG.


THE CARDINAL RULE IN GOING AFTER SOMEONE WITH AN INTENTION TO KILL WAS NOT TO MAKE IT PERSONAL--
WHICH IT ALMOST ALWAYS ENDED UP BEING ANYWAY.
IT DID WITH ME.

I TOOK MY TIME, CRUISING AROUND THE CITY IN THE SNOW.
THERE WAS NO HURRY, I KNEW WHAT I HAD TO DO NOW. I TOOK MY TIME, THINKING ABOUT IT, BUILDING UP THE RAGE.


WHEN I WAS READY, I PARKED THE STOLEN WHEELS AT THE FRONT ENTRANCE OF THE AESIR CORPORATION HQ. GOT OUT, GOT IN, GOT CRACKING.
I HAD A BULLET WITH NICOLE HORNE'S NAME ON IT.
I HAD TEN THOUSAND BULLETS WITH THE HAG'S NAME ON THEM.
SHE HAD ULTRA-HIGH-TECH SECURITY SYSTEMS, ENOUGH MERCENARIES AND WEAPONRY TO START WORLD WAR III.
THERE WAS NO FEAR.

NEW YORK DISAPPEARED BEHIND A VEIL OF SNOW. I HAD CROSSED THE THRESHOLD. THIS WAS HER DOMAIN--
SLEEK AND SEXY AND SOULLESS, ALL GLASS AND STEEL. A PLACE OF COLOR-CODED SECURITY KEY CARDS, METAL DETECTORS AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS.
COLDER THAN A WALK-IN FRIDGE...
COLD AS A GUN.

PING!

MONA. LOOKING GOOD.
MAX, WE GOTTA STOP MEETING LIKE THIS.

IT WILL BE A COLD DAY IN HELL BEFORE I'LL LET A NARC COP STOP ME. MS. SAX, DO YOUR JOB.

RELAX, MAX. YOU'RE A NICE GUY, I DON'T KILL NICE GUYS.
YOU'RE NOT BAD YOURSELF.

IT WAS DIFFERENT WHEN HORNE WANTED PUNCHINELLO DEAD, TO CUT HER TIES TO THE MAFIA. HE DESERVED TO DIE.
THE SAME GOES WITH HER, SHE'S THE BAD GUY HERE.

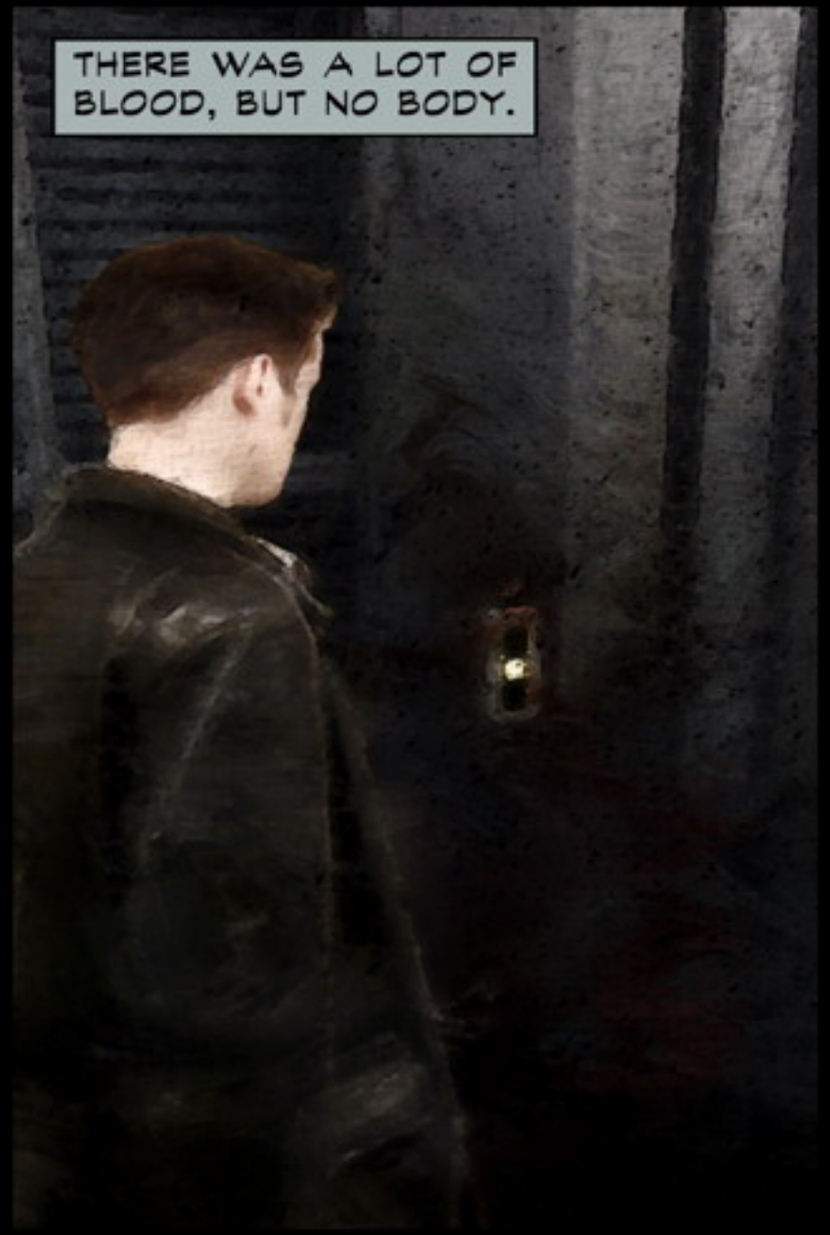
HER SISTER WAS WHISPERING TO HER IN MY FAVOR. I KNEW THE APPETITES OF GHOSTS INTIMATELY. THEY HUNGERED FOR REVENGE.

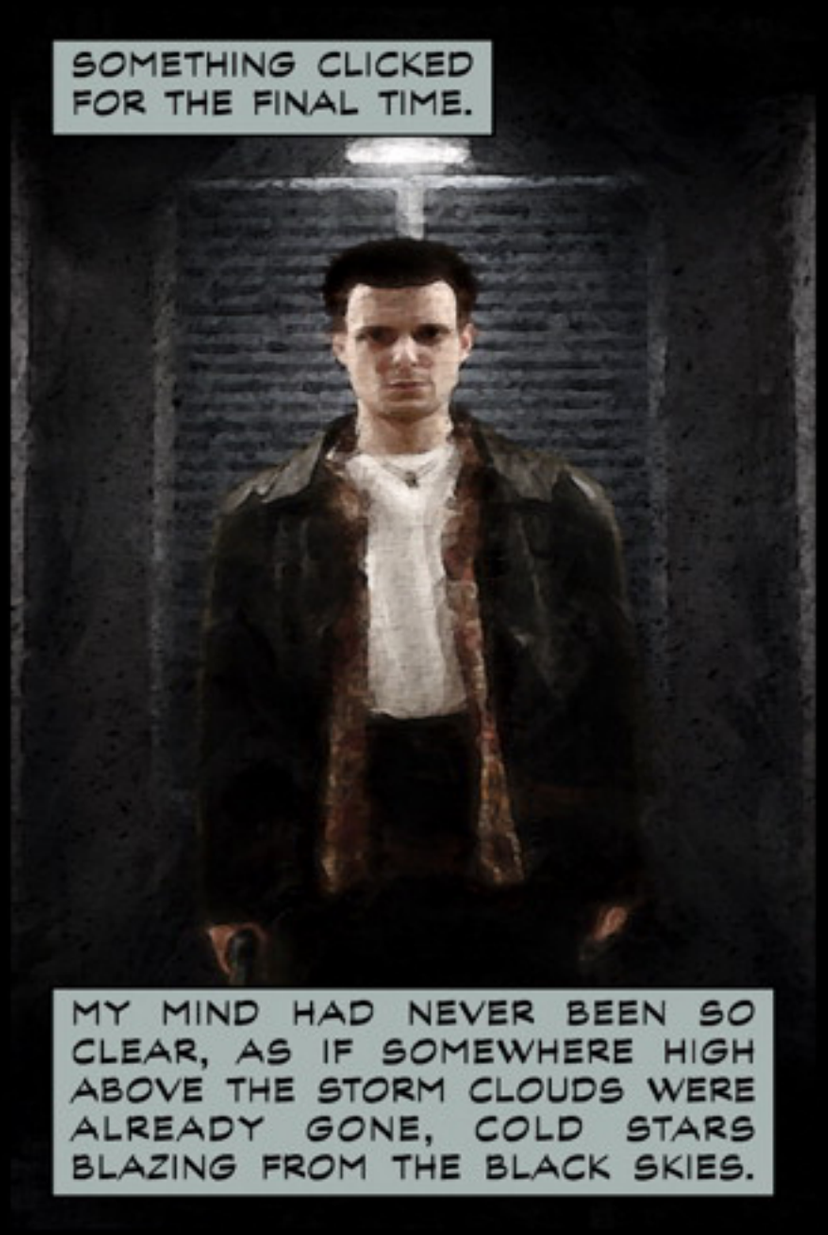
BLAM!
BLAM!
MAX!
NO!

A GUNSHOT BOOMED AND SHE FELL DOWN IN SLOW-MOTION.
SHE WAS A NICE GIRL, NOT REALLY A STONE-COLD KILLER, AND NOW SHE WAS STONE-COLD DEAD.
PING!

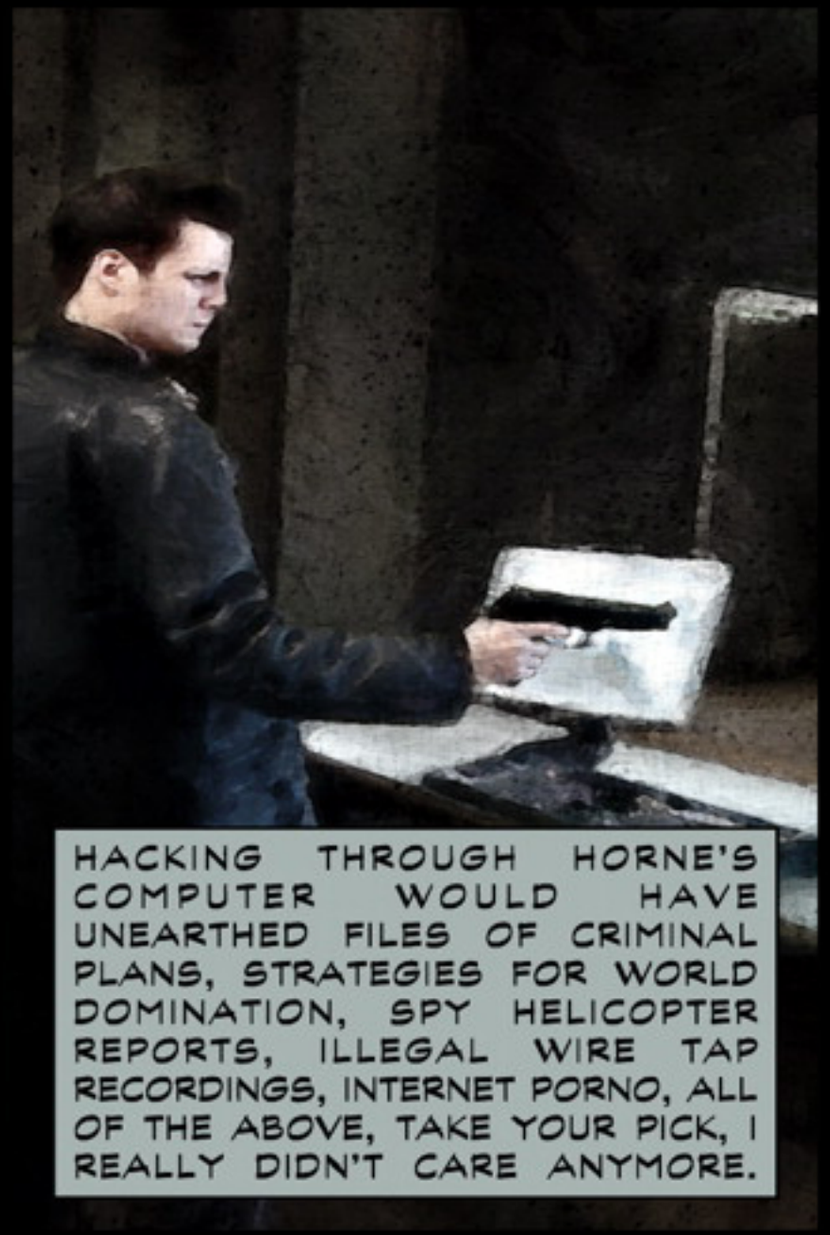
LIKE RELIGIOUS FANATICS OR LOYAL SAMURAI HORNE'S PRIVATE ARMY WAS COMING AT ME.

WHEN THE ELEVATOR CAME BACK DOWN, MONA WAS GONE.


THERE WAS A LOT OF BLOOD, BUT NO BODY.


SOMETHING CLICKED FOR THE FINAL TIME.
MY MIND HAD NEVER BEEN SO CLEAR, AS IF SOMEWHERE HIGH ABOVE THE STORM CLOUDS WERE ALREADY GONE, COLD STARS BLAZING FROM THE BLACK SKIES.

NEXT TO THE PRINTER WAS A NEAT STACK OF EXPENSIVE PAPER.



HACKING THROUGH HORNE'S COMPUTER WOULD HAVE UNEARTHED FILES OF CRIMINAL PLANS, STRATEGIES FOR WORLD DOMINATION, SPY HELICOPTER REPORTS, ILLEGAL WIRE TAP RECORDINGS, INTERNET PORNO, ALL OF THE ABOVE, TAKE YOUR PICK, I REALLY DIDN'T CARE ANYMORE.

MAX PAYNE™
PART III: A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN
CHAPTER EIGHT: PAIN AND SUFFERING

VALKYR HAD BEEN MEANT TO BE A WHITE-WINGED MAIDEN THAT WOULD LIFT YOU TO A WARRIOR'S HEAVEN--

KLIK!

BUT IT HAD TURNED OUT TO BE A ONE-WAY DEMON RIDE TO HELL. THE DEVIL WAS IN THE DRUG. I KNEW. I HAD MET HIM...

AND NOW I WAS GOING TO KILL HER --

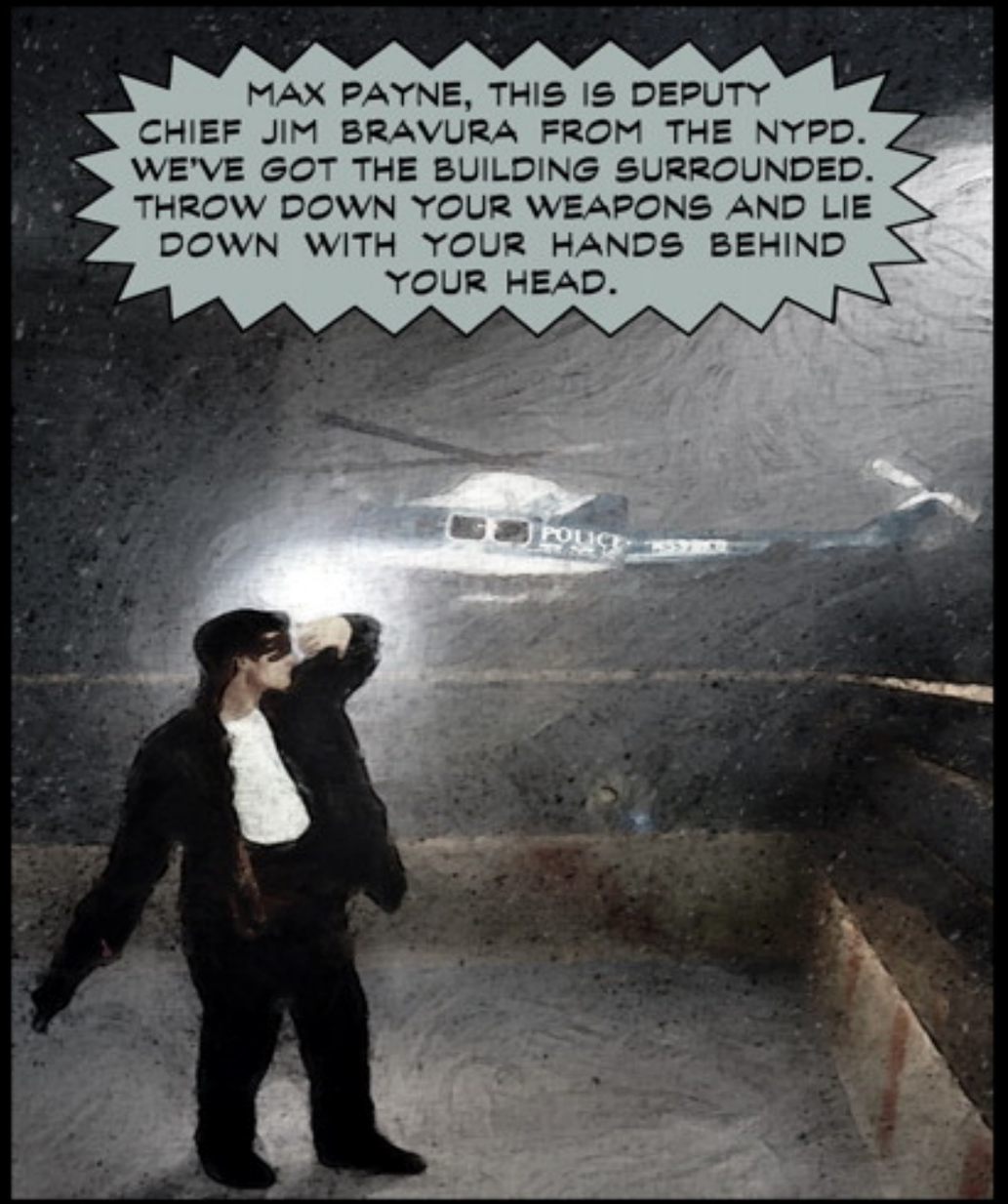
KLIK!

PING!

THE QUEEN OF THE UNDERWORLD WHO HAD TRIED TO LIFT HERSELF A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN WITH HER DRUG MONEY.

NO BEGGING, NO BRIBES, SHE KNEW BETTER - HONOR AMONG KILLERS, "WE WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE."
BOTH OF US KNEW HOW THIS WOULD END. IN PAIN AND SUFFERING.
ALL THIS, BECAUSE YOUR WIFE STUCK HER NOSE INTO THINGS THAT WERE NONE OF HER BUSINESS.
THE COPS WERE COMING TO TAKE ME AWAY. THE SIRENS WERE LIKE A BAD CONSCIENCE I COULDN'T SHAKE.
IT'S RIDICULOUS YOU HAVE MADE IT THIS FAR.
YOU WON'T BE ALIVE WHEN THEY GET HERE.

AND THEN IT WAS ALL OVER. THE STORM SEEMED TO LOSE ITS FRENZY. THE RAGGED CLOUDS GAVE WAY TO THE STARS ABOVE.


MAX PAYNE, THIS IS DEPUTY CHIEF JIM BRAVURA FROM THE NYPD. WE'VE GOT THE BUILDING SURROUNDED. THROW DOWN YOUR WEAPONS AND LIE DOWN WITH YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOUR HEAD.
POLICE

A BIT CLOSER TO HEAVEN.

THE COPS' VOICES WERE DISTANT AND MUTED.
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
FREEZE!
NYPD!
MY GHOSTS RELEASED ME FROM THEIR HAUNTING.
DOWN BELOW, NEW YORK CITY GLITTERED LIKE DIAMONDS ON BLACK VELVET.

YOU GAVE US ONE HELL OF A RIDE--
TAKE HIM DOWN TO CENTRAL BOOKING.

YOU HEARD THE MAN.
WODEN WAS THERE...

...IN THE CROWD, STANDING BY THE SIDELINES. IT WOULDN'T BE OVER TILL THE MAN WITH THE PATCH WOULD SAY SO.
HE'D SAY THE RIGHT WORDS. I KNEW HE WOULD. HE'D BETTER.
WODEN GRINNED SMUGLY, IT WAS THE GRIN OF A WINNER.

THAT MADE TWO OF US.